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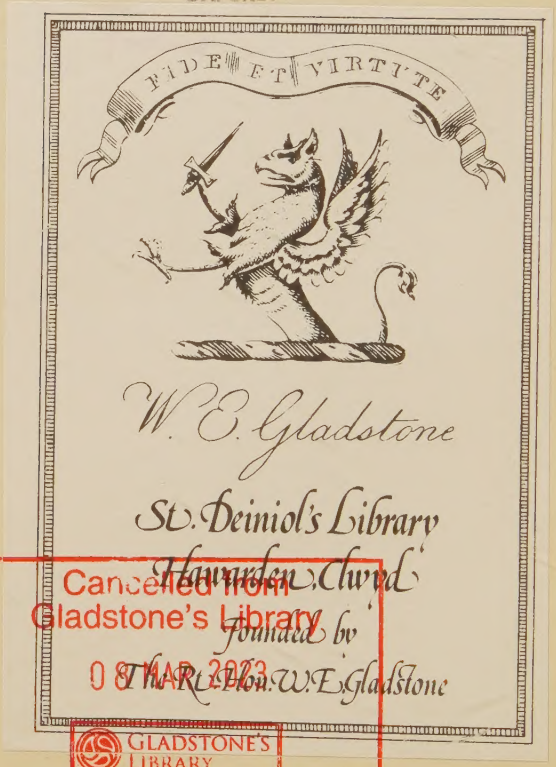

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A Parson's Dilemmas

BY

T. W. PYM

CANON OF BRISTOL
CHAPLAIN TO THE KING

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PREFACE

THIS book contains the Six Lectures in Pastoral Theology for 1929–30 arranged by the Faculty Board of Divinity in the University of Cambridge.

They are reproduced almost as they were delivered, the direct form of address being preserved, and no attempt having been made to write up the lectures in any way.

The aim of the lectures, prepared for delivery to ordination candidates, was to outline the secularist background against which the work of the ministry is now done, to indicate the probable character of that background in the future, and to offer practical advice.

The six hours available for the treatment of the subject necessitated a selection from a host of topics. In my selection I was influenced by two main considerations: first, to present some of the matters which seemed to me of the greatest importance in themselves; secondly, to present those matters which seemed to me to acquire a real importance from the fact that they are commonly disregarded.

Any such selection must mean the omission of a good deal of relevant material. The reader is warned against supposing that the topics which the lecturer was bound to omit are considered by him to be of no account.

T. W. PYM.

March 1930.

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A PARSON'S DILEMMAS

CHAPTER I

SOME ELEMENTS IN MODERN SECULARISM

It is advisable that these lectures should open with a statement of some of the subjects which will not be separately considered. I have no personal experience of ministerial work in country districts, and I realize the importance of such work and the special nature of problems which are peculiar to it. Indeed I sympathize with the resentment of those who complain that the countryside is often ignored. It would have been possible to obtain and then retail at second-hand intimate information on these topics, but I think it more useful to speak from personal experience. Besides which, the most deeply rooted rural dweller would probably agree that there is much ground, in the ministerial life, common to town and country alike.

A more serious omission is suggested by my inability to treat this subject outside the borders of England. Though I have visited many other countries, I have done no regular work overseas (except in France during the war, which doesn't count for this purpose). Yet it would be impossible for us to ignore the fact that the vocation to the

ministry is to-day, more than ever, a vocation to a ministry in the world at large and not only in England. It is obviously undesirable, because unrealistic, that any man considering that vocation should do so in anything less than a context which is world-wide. There is less ground that is common to home and overseas than to town and country here at home. I believe that our Missionary Societies and Central Missionary Council make some provision for special training, and I can do no more than refer you to those bodies and to such a book as *Priest and Parish in India*.[1] This book seems to me to do just the kind of thing which is needed for the man who is going East.

It is interesting, however, to note that the main challenge opposed to the Christian minister to-day meets him alike the world over, both at home and overseas, namely, secularism. You will find that that subject looms large in the first volume of the *Report of the Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council* (1928).[2] Some years ago it was realized that the task of the minister working amongst members of non-Christian religions was less to destroy belief in false gods than to discover true foundations of belief and to build the Christian Faith upon them, discarding what was, in the old religion, utterly contradictory to that Faith, and thankfully using whatever elements were compatible with the Christian revelation. But to-day

[1] S.P.C.K.
[2] Oxford University Press.

we have passed much further along the road. There is good reason to suppose that if the Christian missionary were so foolish as to desire the total destruction of belief in God of any kind in order that he might start afresh, he could rest content in the knowledge that this work is being done for him, however gradually. The question whether Mohammedanism, for instance, or Christianity will ultimately win in Africa and the East is still of great importance. But an even more important question is whether either will survive the steadily increasing march of secularism, the foe of both alike. It may become—even in the lifetime of some of you—a matter, not of whether a native of China or Africa believes in a God of this kind or of that, but whether he is prepared seriously to entertain any interpretation of the universe in terms of the spiritual at all. This in no way lessens our responsibility for converting to Christianity members of other races and religions. The final bulwark against the advance of secularism must be the true presentation of God; the change in situation should call forth increased vigour in the presentation of God as revealed in Christ.

If you want to find a brief and admirable sketch of the same challenge to our Faith here in England, you cannot do better than get hold of the Bishop of Southwark's charges delivered last year on his second visitation of the diocese, and published under the title *Secularism and Christian Unity*.[1] The

[1] S.P.C.K.

existence of such a recent description renders further detail at this point unnecessary.

This, then, is the atmosphere with which those who enter the ministry in our day must be prepared to compete—an atmosphere of indifference to spiritual things, of reliance upon the material. There is little hostility except in one direction which we must consider in a later lecture. There is indeed a great tolerance, the secularist's unspoken bargain which could be put into some such words as these: "Well, here's luck to the Church. Carry on the good work; I don't want to interfere with it or with you. It's a free country—free for me as well as for you. You go your way, and I go my way; it's not a Church-way, but don't you worry."

Or—less kindly—"You leave me alone, and I'll leave you alone. Religion has nearly served its purpose and is dying. It doesn't need my blows to assist its decease. Keep busy with your Christian quarrelling, and forget about us. You'll do the trick in another generation or two. What you're really interested in is how God likes to be worshipped; I don't worship God at all, and don't intend to start. But I don't wish to cramp your style in the least. I have my interests; you have yours. If it amuses you to run conferences about new or old canons, if you think the kind of clothes a parson wears in church are, in your God's sight, really worth all the excitement you work up about it, carry on by all means; carry on."

Now to the point implied in that last imaginary

quotation I would direct your immediate attention; nor does it matter now that we might complain that the objection is unfair, exaggerated, un-understanding; we cannot honestly complain that it is in some form or other entirely undeserved. There are two things in chief which I would say about it now. First, it is not a form of charge to be found only in the minds of fairly well-educated people. I have found the thought, or its results, again and again amongst even the roughest and poorest.

The form which it takes amongst these is as a convenient turn to give to conversation with a minister of religion. You are, for instance, tackling an apparently godless young coster on the fundamental questions of life; you are trying to bring the Gospel of Christ to his notice. Unless you are on your guard you will find yourself ten minutes later discussing with him the cotta worn at the church round the corner or the reasons why, in your opinion, the Wesleyan communion is or is not inferior to the Church of England. (If this is at all correct—then it would form a curious commentary on the teaching of religion that those who were almost utterly ignorant of the Bible, of the Church's beliefs about God and Jesus, were often to be found slightly less ignorant about cottas, candles, His Holiness the Pope, and other topics of an ecclesiastically controversial nature.) You may say good-night to that man, flattering yourself that you have done good work for your particular school of Christianity, or reflecting that it is nice

to find people so interested in Church matters. But it is unlikely that you have done anything for Our Lord. Furthermore, your assumption about interest might be unduly optimistic. The man wanted to evade the personal issue; he knew a dodge for leading you off it, and he found you an easy prey.

This brings us to the other point. For that man will find you an easy prey only if you are preoccupied with an interest so absorbing in your own view of Christianity that you put that first and Christ second. And that is exactly what they suppose that we do. Of course, if a man seeks to evade the challenge that Christ will make to him, he will find some excuse for doing so. The point is whether we ought to give quite such a good excuse as our dissensions provide.

I am not meaning for one moment to suggest that the disunion of organized Christianity is a cause of modern secularism. But it is a great hindrance to us in coping with it, and chiefly so for a reason still to be mentioned; the business of taking sides and helping one's side to win out within Christendom blinds us to the fact that the body of professing or church-attending Christians in our own country is shrinking. The decline is greater than that to be expected as a natural result of loss of life in the war or of the decline in the birth-rate. (Such factors must be taken into account if one is concerned with statistics.) You can fill the Albert Hall in London or perhaps the Guildhall here with

Christians, certainly with keenly partisan Church people, with little or no difficulty. In the comfort of a crowd it is easy to forget the absent, the unconverted, the indifferent, the completely materialistic. Your crowd which may comfort you is a decreasing percentage of the whole population. If the Church is to meet the day's challenge to evangelism, its present and future generations of clergy must lift their gaze beyond the fringe of the comparatively small crowd surrounding them and escape from the mental snare of self-deception which the number of adherents may form.

It is not my intention to occupy any more of these lectures with the disunion which exists amongst Christians, but I have put it to the fore now because of its very great urgency. The house in which you live is on fire; it is burning rapidly. Do not, I beseech you, turn over sleepily in bed and say, "A lot of fuss about nothing; I'll see to it in the morning." For that morning may never come in your earthly life. And if you do not care that the Son of Man be betrayed, sleep on now and take your rest.

It would not be possible within our limits to deal with all the causes of modern secularism, nor to prescribe wholly for its cure. I will only try to indicate some of the points which are of great practical importance to those entering the ministry to-day.

In taking this as the first subject, I lay myself open to the objection, I know, that it is a dis-

couraging start to make; that I ought to encourage rather than depress; that if this first lecture were attended by one who was very slowly considering the rather vague possibility of taking Holy Orders, it would heavily weight the chances against his eventual ordination. I do not believe it; that is to say I do not believe that the kind of man who is going to be of any real Christian service in the ministry, will be deterred by the knowledge that the situation which confronts him is difficult, or would wish those difficulties obscured.

First of all I believe that we are faced with the delayed action of something which started long ago, and that it is important not to ignore what may be to ourselves past campaigns, but are present realities in the minds of an increasing number of people. The departure from Heaven and Hell as localities; from the literal, prosaic truth of every word in the Bible, and the equal inspiration of all its parts; the evolutionary principle—these are samples of the sort of thing I mean. The shock of such to Christian orthodoxy we judge to be a matter of the history of the hundred years or less before our own time; the Church, we think, has long ago adjusted herself to that shock and lived it down. This is only in part true, and it is highly dangerous to assume it.

It has taken some generations for the common mind to be infected—not so much with a knowledge of modern scientific theory, as with the misunderstanding that the Church opposes it. We are by

degrees reaching the climax of that misunderstanding. The Church once opposed, or redoubtable champions who were taken to represent the Church, opposed all these changes of attitude, which many of us now take for granted. The so-called " man in the street " does not believe that there is a place called Heaven above him, and another called Hell beneath him: nor do I. But he thinks that I do believe it; and if he doesn't think that, he wonders how on earth I have a religion worth preaching if I'm going to leave that out. That is significant; remove fear and self-advantage as direct motives in chief and you destroy the framework of what the ordinary person supposes Christianity to be.

He does not believe in Genesis as a literal and exact description in verbal detail of the world's creation: nor do I. But he thinks that I do believe it; and if he doesn't think that, he wonders how I square my attitude with being a clergyman, and how on earth I base my religion on the Bible if I " don't believe the Bible to be true." That is the sweeping way in which he would put it, and it is, surely, impossible not to sympathize with his point of view.

I am sorry, as it were, to drag you back on to these old subjects, but they are vitally new; you cannot afford to ignore them. You may argue, " But surely, here again, you are in part quoting from what educated people might say, and they at least understand our attitude, whether or not they

agree with it." My answer is, "No, I am talking here of the rank and file, who have realized part, and part only, of what has been happening in the past fifty years." To support my contention I would quote from *The Spirit of Discipline*, written many years ago by Bishop Paget of Oxford: "The moral influence of any form of unbelief which is largely talked about, reaches far beyond the range of its intellectual appeal; it is felt more widely than it is understood; in many cases it gets at the springs of action without passing through the mind." "*It is felt more widely than it is understood.*" I believe those words to contain a profound truth, which is of direct application to what we are considering. We have to deal, not with something which is thought out in detail, but with something which is about, like an infection; it influences the majority without conscious definition.

The remedy is, clearly, to speed up the pace at which the newer Christian interpretation of the facts is in its turn apprehended. My own belief is that the problem focuses more on to one solution than any other, that is the right interpretation of the Bible, and right teaching about it. We clergy are tempted to assume that people understand, when they do not, or to be too considerate for those of the faithful laity who might be unduly shocked if we explained. Hence we slur it all over, and the secularization of human society is the bill that is presented to us.

But I would not encourage the idea that secu-

larism is not also due to very modern causes; that there is this older element, as a cause, I am sure, but there is as well a really modern element.

This is the effect of scientific advance in the first quarter of this present century. And it is not in terms of "intellectual unrest" that I first think of this effect. The result is rather a mental self-sufficiency which leaves but little place for God. For there are two or three alternative effects which this unparalleled advance may have on the mind; the first and by far the commonest is, "How wonderful is man to make such advances! He holds the universe in the hollow of his hand." New things in electricity, practical realizable things like wireless, motor-power, and so forth—because they are so new and, in a sense, so immediate, dwarf into insignificance the centuries-old appearance of a new type of manhood in Jesus. That is stale; the human mind has become accustomed to it; it has not yet grasped the idea that the fact that man can weigh a star or wireless the distorted features of a newspaper editor across the Atlantic in a second or so is actually a less wonderful phenomenon than the man, Jesus. And, because of this in part, belief in any divinity of Christ is shrinking. I would draw your special attention to this. Think out the fact of Jesus against this very modern background, and teach what you yourself believe, showing how you arrive at that belief.

There are, of course, other ways in which modern scientific discovery might affect the mind, *e.g.*, of

the scientist himself, thus: "What modern discovery and theory have chiefly done for me is to have extended almost incredibly my realization of the field of man's ignorance;" or of the theologian, thus: "The discoveries of man reveal afresh to me the wonders of Him who made both man and the things which he discovers."

There are other elements in modern secularism than that which I have attempted to describe. That however is, I believe, the commonest; and, surely, it is very natural. It is not simply intellectual materialism of the old kind; it is not that man sits down and thinks over the problems of life, being finally worried into materialistic agnosticism. It is rather that the unconscious mental effect of modern life is to squeeze God out; the faculty of wonder is satisfied by man's own achievements; there is but little scope or energy left for the worship of God. The facts of his material environment are undigested, unassimilated; man is intoxicated with himself. And this matters enormously; it is sometimes mistakenly supposed that worship is the climax of the religious experience alone; but it is also very often its first stage. Drug the faculty of wonder and you produce an insensitiveness to God.

And yet the civilization which has produced, or is the product of, this state of affairs is a rickety and unstable concern; that is the pathetic and, in some respects, rather amazing fact. We hold our breath lest man learn humility through the crash of that framework of life on which he prides himself;

lest knowledge which he cannot control to a proper use prove his undoing.

You cannot look round our world, viewed economically and industrially, racially, internationally, and deny that such a crash is possible. You may say that such a possibility and the factors which contribute towards it are beyond the sphere of the individual minister of religion. But this is not so if faith in Christ rather than faith in man, or faith in man because of faith in Christ is the remedy. For that faith we are commissioned to teach, and before passing on to consider in detail some of the ways in which the great responsibilities of that ministry may be efficiently discharged, I have chosen in this first lecture to sketch, however inadequately, a part of the background against which those responsibilities must be considered.

And here, for what they are worth, are a prophecy and a recommendation, both interconnected with that idea to which I have already referred, of the need of a new humility.

The most recent and competent scientific theories[1] assure us that, barring certain improbable accidents, the expectation of the continuance of human life on this planet is one of millions of years. Man may exterminate himself before that, but it seems unlikely that the forces of nature will bring him quickly to an end.

My prophecy is that in a quarter or half a century, that theory or information will have filtered down

[1] *E.g.* Sir James Jeans in *The Universe around us*. O.U.P.

till it infects the popular mind; if so, an entirely new outlook will gradually become common—not without its own difficulties but at any rate comprising that better sense of proportion which is an important ingredient of humility. For as we look down the almost endless road of man's probable future life on earth, we must realize that we live now at the very dawn of human history, and barely on the threshold of what may one day be called the modern scientific age. We and our modernity will one day appear puny enough—or at least ever so much more remote than anything human on which we can now look back.

My recommendation to you is to adjust your own mental vision to that new focus. There is, I suppose, a natural focusing distance of the physical eye of the average man; so mentally, when we look forward, most of us have a natural range of vision of about forty years ahead; we are concerned with what will happen in our own lifetime, or in the time of our children or grandchildren. Lift your gaze beyond that; lengthen your range of vision. You will, thereby, achieve a better sense of proportion about many things; there are ways in which your teaching of religion will be affected by the new view. Above all you will be doing your part in preventing the necessity for the Church, in 1950 and after, to appear as if she had only just discovered something known of old. For that will constitute a part of the charge of the secularist in 1950. "Ah! The Church has been frightened of

this new knowledge and has concealed it. What about the Advent message? Here's another point in which science and Christianity are at loggerheads. The Church says 'Soon' or 'Soonish,' science says 'Probably not for many millions of years.'"

If this sort of thing is ever to be said, let us for once meet it in advance, and not allow the Church in this matter to be a quarter or half a century late. It might be thought that I have in mind merely the minority of Church-people who hold very decided views about a speedy Second Advent, or the even smaller number of people who, from time to time, notify us of the exact day upon which the world will come to an end. But I am not thinking of them. I have in mind the far larger number of ordinary Church-people who would repudiate any extreme view. They would equally reject the probability of the extension of man's life on earth millions, or even hundreds of thousands, of years into the future. There are certainly two factors which play a part in this unwillingness; one is a very human dislike of being relegated to a position of relatively extreme unimportance in the drama of human history. If the scientists should prove correct, if the day should ever come when our times will be included in several centuries together and referred to collectively as "the European phase," or "one of the European phases," it is much harder—on that assumption—to preserve intact the notion that we live in a time of crisis, that ours is an age of supreme importance. That, after

all, is a modest way of saying that we are people of supreme importance. It is human vanity.

Our importance in the stream of mankind does not derive from any particular theory as to the length of mankind's life. It is due, if we are Christians, to our belief that for each of us, however insignificant, God has a purpose.

The other factor to which I have referred is religious. Though the expectancy of a speedy end to human existence is no longer preached commonly, the idea of it is only dying very slowly. Our Advent hymns, sometimes our Advent sermons, keep alive the idea that it is slightly sub-Christian to accept the scientific view about the future, even though we are, very slowly, accepting scientific views in general about the past. I confess that I am puzzled by this religious element; I can see why in the days when Paul wrote his Epistles it might have been part of a good disciple's faith to believe in an immediate Second Coming. But I cannot see why in 1930 a man should be supposed to be any less Christian, because he thinks it likely, the Second Coming having been delayed for 1900 years, that it may not take place for another 1,900,000 years. I do not see that Christian doctrine has anything to say either way about it.

It will be unexpected, yes; it would be indeed unexpected to-morrow; it may be equally unexpected a million years hence. The religious point surely is the uncertainty of the individual life; the

duration of that is absolutely unpredictable; the time that any one of us may have for carrying out God's purpose is very short, and may prove even shorter than we suppose. We know not the day nor the hour; all we do know for certain is that the night cometh—or that our dawn will break.

But this interpretation is to-day not realized by the majority of people. My fear is lest the Church some years hence appear to be vigorously preaching an adaptation adjusted by compulsion to what has become, by then, a popular view; this would mean that Christian Faith would be at a great, and, as I hold, serious disadvantage. Moreover, the scientific view will, unless we make provision, capture the popular mind much quicker than the mind of Church-people. There is very little brake, in the way of religious reluctance, to hold it back. It is, of course, impossible to foretell how long a new idea will take to percolate so that it becomes general. Darwinism was slower to do so than it would be to-day with our increased educational facilities and quicker means of communication. Freudian psychology began to influence the popular mind—in the manner which Bishop Paget has in general described—more quickly than might have been expected.

What happens to most of us, I suppose, is this: at a university we can hardly escape being brought face to face with some, if only some, of the intellectual problems which directly or indirectly

make for modern secularism. It is here, in the course of our own preparation for Holy Orders, that we wrestle with the thing and are perhaps tortured by its difficulty; but it is focused on the question: "Ought I to be, can I honestly be Ordained?" If we find our way through the maze we tend, most naturally, to turn our backs on the subject with a sigh of relief. We have thought the problem out more in terms of our own honesty (for that has been our preoccupation), than in terms of elucidation to others, or of interpretation into language and idea which they can understand.

But what after university days was dismissed turns up in some form or other in the thought or conduct of the people committed to our care years and years later. Once we were equipped to meet the difficulty, for there cannot be any more suitable equipment than the answer which a man has hammered out to his own problem. But the hammer has gone rusty; nor have we kept at all up to date; we give the impression of being caught unawares. It is not to be wondered at that the Archbishops of Canterbury and York should have issued their Pastoral Letter last year, calling upon the clergy to study and think.

Only the man of outstanding intellectual attainment can grasp the significance of all the attacks from all quarters upon the faith which he professes. But the absurdity of attempting the impossible is a bad reason for turning our backs upon the possible. The Church needs its expert thinkers; but none of

us must make his more restricted mentality an excuse for not thinking or studying at all. There is nothing more helpful as an incentive not to stop thinking than to have a subject as a hobby. We all of us have our bent, even if we take some time in discovering it. It is possible, without our realizing it, to pursue some line of inquiry which is, in its nature, divorced from the actualities of our work in life, and to seek, in that study, a complete change of interest and a compensation for the difficulty of life itself. That is an excellent thing and is much nearer a strict hobby or recreation than what I mean. For—no doubt in addition to this—I have in mind rather a specialization which is vocational and plays a direct part in our work. If such a specialization is to be generally adopted, the minimum standard must clearly be lower than that which we associate with research at the university. Indeed it must be so for many of us, else we could not undertake it at all. Our aim in it is not to become more proficient than anyone else; for many of us that would be too vain an enterprise to carry us very far; but rather to be more proficient in that one subject or department than we ourselves are in any other. A working hobby of that description is valuable, chiefly in that it keeps a man from mental stagnation. I do not, at this point, illustrate the sort of subject which might be selected; such as I am able to give any sort of clear lead about will emerge. The point now is that if every man will discover and follow up his bent he

is playing his part in the defence-works of the Church.

And it is not so much a defence of the Faith that is needed as an explanation of it. What has struck me so often is that the thing I find being attacked is not what I believe to be Christianity at all; it is often a ludicrous—though quite honest—burlesque of it. On analysis it proves to be rooted in old-fashioned ideas, and thus we cannot safely assume that what are to us, in a university class-room, matters of course, have yet percolated to the understanding of the majority of ordinary people.

For we clergy are—most of us—not ordinary people. It was a great missionary who first made me realize this fully. He pointed out to me, kindly but quite firmly, that compared to the vast majority of my fellow-countrymen I had had an abnormal home; that my education at preparatory school, public school and university were even grosser abnormalities; and that a theological college was the most peculiar place of all.

It is well to remember this at times, because the need of an ever-renewed humility belongs to us clergy as well as to the generation to which we are called to minister. If we have talents, intellectual or other conspicuous equipment, we need the humility without which we cannot expect the grace of understanding other people's position and of ability to talk to them in the language of their minds,

If we are inclined to say that, not being gifted intellectually, we cannot do much about modern secularism on that side of things, let us not be too sure about it. A false humility may too easily become an excuse for slackness, lack of study, failure to develop the equipment which God has given us, and a betrayal of Him whose Gospel can after all only reach men's consciences and wills through their minds.

In this connexion, for the encouragement of those who are at all inclined ever to be oppressed with an undue conviction that they are, mentally, very average people and no more, I would add something which has repeatedly come within my own observation; it is the very great difference in age at which men's best powers blossom. Any senior member of a college could recall many instances of men whose subsequent careers did not seem to justify the great expectations entertained for them in their undergraduate days; it is as if the impulse of development had started and then spent itself at an early age. Other men, who have shown disappointingly few signs of mental alertness right up to the end of their time at a university, have later in life developed unexpected abilities. I can recall many instances of this, and it has seemed to me that this later development might well form part of the Christian expectation of the man of faith. To believe that the best is yet to be, to live life on the assumption that there are ever as yet undiscovered possi-

bilities to be explored — this should be an important element in the outlook of all Christian people, particularly of those who seek the Grace of Holy Orders to assist their best development.

CHAPTER II

THE MORAL OUTLOOK

In the first lecture we considered some elements in the religious situation confronting the Christian minister to-day. Now let us turn to some elements of the moral situation.

There is the theory that an alteration in the moral situation is the result of decay of belief. I do not disagree with that theory though it is not the factor on which I lay most stress. The theory, roughly, is this: modern secularism in belief started many years ago. In those days some people said, hopefully: "Well, even if Christian Orthodoxy is shaken, we have still the example of Jesus left; the Christian standard of character remains."

To which others replied: "No. Once belief in the Faith of the Church is weakened, Christian standards of conduct will begin to crumble. There will be no sanction for them; weaken the basis upon which they rest, and they too will totter and go." Thus we are now told: "It is happening. The Christian Faith has been weakened; there is no longer an adequate basis for Christian morality, and that is going too."

I do not deny the truth of this connexion between belief and conduct, but I propose to ignore it now,

because it seems to me that what is happening in the sphere of conduct is not to be adequately explained by anything which has yet happened in the sphere of belief. There are other causes at work and exclusive stress upon intellectual unsettlement would lead us to concentrate on one line of recovery alone. Therein lies a danger, for we cannot afford to take the line—"Given a right belief, right conduct will follow. Hammer away at Christian belief, at creed, at intellectual interpretation of dogma and, if we can only get that right, then Christian standards of conduct will regain their natural position."

Such a line of argument may become an excuse for mental indolence about moral questions; we are tempted to treat moral conduct simply as an unchanging body that is bound inevitably to follow upon a right belief. It is likely that it can be shown that belief and conduct are not so unavoidably joined in that sequence that it ceases to be worth while to consider Christian conduct, for once, by itself, or even as a cause rather than an effect of unbelief.

It might occur that a religious belief weakened partly because men and women found themselves unable to accept the morality which seemed to be attached to it, and it is this possibility with which our minds will be confronted.

Mr Walter Lippmann in *A Preface to Morals*,[1] reviews, from a secular standpoint, the prevalent

[1] George Allen & Unwin.

moral confusion and attributes it to the loss of the Church's moral authority owing to decay of belief in the Church's religious faith. His opinion is, I am sure, good evidence, but I am equally sure that there is a sort of vicious circle. People may claim a new liberty in conduct because they no longer admit religious sanctions; but they may also question the validity of religious experience because they are seriously perturbed by what they suppose to be the moral ideas which are the apparent fruit of that experience.

It is necessary at the start to note that the fabric of the moral structure of an individual or of a society is normally of one piece. You cannot easily alter a part of it without changing the pattern as a whole. For example, if a hitherto upright man yields to pressure of family need and starts defrauding his employers, we should not be surprised to find that in the course of years his character deteriorated in other respects also. It is unlikely that he could admit the poison to his system and then localize it entirely; such localization would be, not unique, by any means, but uncommon.

Or again a person may become persuaded that he is not merely justified in breaking what has hitherto been to him a sacred rule of conduct, in order, under particular circumstances, to fulfil a principle even more sacred—but that he is morally bound to do so. It is at least likely that having done this once or twice, he will either unconsciously cease in other matters to live by his former code

of rules, or he will deliberately reconsider all his rules in the light of a higher principle which he has found to override one of those rules.

Thus—if it were clear to us that in any one matter there was a widespread change in conduct or in the method of deciding some one particular question of right and wrong, we should be extremely foolish in supposing that otherwise things would remain just what they had been. This principle naturally works both ways: if the change in substance or method is what we should call "worse," then the whole moral standard will deteriorate to that level; if the change is for the better, then the improvement will tend to spread to other subjects.

I have just referred to moral confusion; it is well expressed by Mr Lippmann: "The function of the moralist in this age is not to exhort men to be good, but to elucidate what the good is." That is in doubt—what the good is. Now, though I shall mention particular matters about which an increasing number of people are in doubt as to what the good is, I want to make it clear that I believe this is an age of such moral unsettlement and perplexity that almost any precept of conduct is liable to be re-examined. The assumption behind the practice of casuistry (an unpopular word which, strictly used, describes an activity of great value) was that, normally, for the ordinary man, the Christian duty was this or that; then certain cases were considered where very special circumstances might possibly

be held to justify a departure from the normal Christian duty.

Typical of such special cases is that which is a classic to every ordination candidate; the Christian stands at a cross-roads, down the left-hand fork of which a man, dressed in such and such wise, has just passed; enter a third man in hot pursuit, evidently intent on murdering the walker. "Down which road did a man dressed in such and such wise proceed?" he asks. And how shall the Christian reply? Shall he lie, or shall he, by speaking the truth, give probable assistance to a murder? I say that the assumption has always been that such cases of difficulty were exceptional; that, however hard it might be to do the good, it was not, usually, difficult to decide what the good was. There are two ways in which this has changed. In the first place, modern life is so complex that what used to be the special and exceptional case is now the ordinary. I do not mean that it is a common experience to chat with murderers at cross-roads, but that it is common to be confronted in one's own life with a moral dilemma which deserves special consideration and has none given to it. For casuistry, if it can be said to exist at all as a serious study in the Church of England, still assumes that the path of the Christian pilgrim in conduct is pretty straightforward, and that difficult cases of conscience affect only a small percentage.

The other charge is this: not only is the application of the principle in doubt, but it is not clear to

an increasing number of people what exactly is the principle which must be applied. It is that rather which I think is meant by the author whom I have quoted as saying, "The function of the moralist in this age is not to exhort men to be good, but to elucidate what the good is." I should not go so far as to agree with many who would describe this as an age of moral anarchy; I do not believe it is true; of conscious freedom morally to experiment, of complete distrust of moral exhortations issued unreasoningly in the name of authority, of genuine doubt as to what the good is—all this, yes; and, of course, the temptation to seize this confusion as an excuse for throwing over conventional standards of morality. Whether or not a time of growing moral confusion is to develop into an age of moral anarchy depends still in part upon the influence and teaching, the thought and unremitting prayer for the Holy Spirit's guidance of those who are entering the ministry now or shall enter it.

I propose, therefore, to mention some of what seem to me the outstanding factors which should concern ourselves, and to comment upon some of them only.

For some reason or other, which I find difficult to analyse exactly, the Church has given people the impression that its most important moral exhortations are negative; that it is more interested in restraining people from doing wrong things than in calling them to positive moral achievement; not to swear, not to gamble and drink, not to lie

and steal, and so forth. Now the new effect of popularized psychology is to make people distrust a morality that is mainly restrictive or prohibitive. I hope you will not underestimate the great importance of this factor because no more is here said about it. Psychology actually seems to many thoughtful people to give a more Christian tone to moral conduct than that which they get in confirmation classes and sermons. Yet, how can psychology be more Christlike than the teaching of Christ's Church? Small wonder there is confusion!

But to others, a far larger number of less thoughtful people popularized psychology, only half-understood, conveys the impression that all restraint is harmful, that self-discipline is not only unnecessary but actually disastrous, and that liberty to do as one likes is the only sound scientific principle upon which to live. There is a very effective Christian answer to this modern gospel of "self-expression," an answer, moreover, which does not ignore psychology; and ministers and Christian teachers often do not expound the answer because they do not realize what enormous inroads into moral conduct have been made by this pseudo-psychological theory.

Then there are two modern realizations about the faculty of sex. The first and most widespread is that the enjoyment of physical relationship between man and woman can be separated from any consequent conception of children. I would

bring to your attention two elements in this whole matter which commonly seem to escape the notice of moral protagonists on one side or the other. The first is that we can yet have no complete scientific verdict; hints we may have and pointers, but no certainty. Racially, for instance, it is said that there cannot possibly be or, equally, that there must inevitably be evil results—results emotional, mental, psychological. But it is surely clear that no decision on such a question can really be reached except by the carefully kept record of a large number of families all using contraceptives of different kinds and observed not only in one generation alone, but perhaps as far as the fourth generation. There is, instead of this, a vast amount probably, of amateur chemical experiment, the amount of which, indeed the exact nature of which, cannot in any particular case be known. We have no medical authority who claims to have made anything like what he himself would admit to be truly scientific research into the question of the ultimate physical or psychological effect of contraceptives upon the race. Thus when you hear confident medical authority pronouncing in favour of contraceptives or against them, you may know that this pronouncement contains in it a speculative element. Further, if at all you base your own view in moral favour or condemnation of the use of contraceptives, upon medical pronouncements, do remember that a distinguished array of medical men and women could be produced who would

contradict the medical views with which you were bolstering your moral case—no matter on which side you are in the matter.

I am aware that some distinguished members of the medical profession would maintain, in answer to me, that the general mental and physiological results of the use of contraceptives are sufficiently known. Apart from the fact that doctors, studying this matter, could be quoted as holding a contrary opinion, I would put the uncertainty on another ground: can it possibly be now known what changes in the national character may appear when a majority of English families are composed of "only" children, or not more than three children?

The other ignored factor in the situation is this. And I prefer to put it in the form of a big question, for I am not prepared to commit myself to a general answer. It is very commonly supposed that contraceptives are in very common use amongst married people. I agree. Partly as a result of this it is alleged that families are smaller. Again I agree. My question is this: Are the families of ministers of religion an exception to this tendency? Has there been a steady decline in the last quarter of a century in the size of clerical families? If so, to what causes is it to be attributed? Is it due to abstention from physical relationships on the part of married clergy, or do they indulge physical relationships, while taking care by some means or other to prevent conception? Suppose that a statistical inquiry—which would not be a difficult

matter—revealed that the decline in the size of clerical families was about the same in proportion to the decline in other professions; I have not worked out the statistics, but I believe this to be so. Suppose, further, that you are driven to conclude that the causes of this decline (of which the deliberate prevention of conception is only one) are probably not different as between clergy and laity. Suppose lastly—and none of these are wild flights of the imagination—that the Lambeth Conference of 1930, while leaving loopholes, again as good as condemns the prevention of conception, then we have a situation which, for its moral confusion, would be hard to beat. The Bishops would be, in effect, calling upon the clergy to condemn something which they, the clergy, themselves practised, many of them, and which those clergy justified in some instances on the grounds that they were in receipt of a stipend on which it was impossible to rear any or more than two children.

But even to-day there is enough moral bewilderment due to this particular cause. Some people are saying, and many more are thinking: "Christianity seems, through the Churches, to condemn the control of conception by any artificial device. Yet the clergy—some of them, many of them—MUST themselves employ contraceptive measures." Now, let us even suppose that this last statement is false; no one *says* that it is false, and no one can say so; because nobody can know.

Let us now pass to something more immediately

practical for ourselves, and consider just one of the many effects of this new realization about sex, namely that the physical satisfaction of this impulse can be separated from its otherwise normal result in the conception of children. This effect is that it will increasingly remove fear as a motive in the sexual conduct of the unmarried. This must cause us furiously to think, and such questions as the following should arise in our minds To what extent has the Church hitherto really relied on the fear-motive, not only in this matter, but in the whole sphere of moral conduct? What difference, for instance, would really be made by a final abandonment of belief in Heaven and Hell, as reward and punishment? What is the correct place of the fear-motive in Christian morality? What basis have we really for preaching continence for the unmarried, if the illegitimate child ceases to figure in the picture? I do not imply, by any means, that there is no basis. But I do wish to imply that in the past we have not thought out that basis, that we have relied, maybe unconsciously, on capping other arguments by saying: "Well, of course, it's most wrong to bring children into the world who will have no proper home, no fixed parents; children who will be branded with illegitimacy." The popular answer to this conclusion to-day is: "But of course we shan't have children, as long as we remain unmarried."

In this matter the clergy have no considered basis upon which to give sex-instruction. Any that is

now thought out must suffer the usual handicaps, sketched in my last lecture, of trying to catch up and modify a new idea which has had a long start in the popular mind.

This whole problem does not become easier when we notice the second realization which is dawning upon the understanding of men and women. This second realization is newer; it has not yet percolated to the less educated, but that is only a matter of time. It is, perhaps, even more revolutionary. It is a double realization: first that there is nothing *per se* nasty or shameful about sex-powers and physical relationships of men and women; and secondly that the Church, at least by implication, treats the physical function of sex as if it were not quite nice. These things, whether true or not, are being said and thought, and will be said and thought increasingly. The two sides of this realization, taken together, if ignored by the Church, will result in a complete stultification of our influence on sexual morality in any direction except with a steadily contracting inner circle comprising a smaller and smaller proportion even of Church people, and those, perforce, the less intelligent or the more ignorant.

The choices before us are not many and can be simply stated. We must either decide that the gift of God in those powers of men and women which are necessary to the continuance of the human race is really rather shameful; then we must not leave this to be implied, but must definitely and

openly say it and—what is more—say why. Or we must agree that from the Christian standpoint sex is not nasty at all in itself; and in this event either we must get very busy defending the Church against the monstrous charge that is made against it, that it has perverted God's truth in this matter, explaining where and why the charge is so unfair, by saying, for instance, that the Church has treated the matter with reserve, because it is sacred rather than because it is nasty; or we must admit the charge to be at least in part true, and must try to convince people that in spite of mistakes in the past, Christian opinion can still be trusted as a moral guide.

The great thing is to take some definite step while some sort of initiative is ours, and not to wait until what is at present only highbrow, has become the popular idea and we are twenty or thirty years too late in trying to catch up. The subject is so serious in its likely effect on the influence of the Church as a moral guide not only in sex, but in the sphere of conduct as a whole, that I feel bound to state my own opinion.

I have no doubt myself that the right way in which to regard the sex-faculty is as an endowment from God, free from shame, and above all, ordinary, though sacred. I hold that the charge is a perfectly fair one, within limits, that the Church has been mistaken in its presentation. I find various difficulties in proceeding from that point to work out the sex-implications of a truly Christian outlook,

but about the main choice of alternatives which I have presented to you I am in no doubt. Whether or not my own choice is right matters less than that you should face the problem and make some choice, whether it be mine or another. For to muddle along any longer, undecided even unnoticing, we simply cannot afford.

The next factor which I wish to bring to your notice in connexion with moral confusion—just one of many—is the War. Perhaps you thought you had done with it; I'm afraid you haven't. At the time and in the few years immediately after it there was talk in patches about the failure of organized religion to render such a thing as war on that scale impossible; there was discussion about the mind of Christ in regard to war, and about the faithfulness or otherwise of the Church in expressing that mind. The talk has died away; whether or not it was ever general enough amongst highly educated and thoughtful people to start a percolation downwards I am not able to say; I should guess, however, that the infection of the idea was quietly spreading because, in its origin, it did not belong simply to the very highly educated; many a group of Trade Unionists, for instance, discussed it freely.

I can only hazard the opinion that in the course of years to come it will be realized as another charge against the capacity of the Church of Christ for moral leadership that secular opinion outlawed war before the Church had decided that it was sufficiently contrary to the mind of Christ to outlaw in His

name. I am assuming, you will notice, that within a generation or two war—on the scale on which we have known it—will pass from the experience of mankind, after another last war or before that catastrophe. It is, of course, still possible that Christian influence may so be brought to bear on this matter that the removal of war will be attributable in part to the exertions of organized religion. But the years are passing; there is no marked interest of the rank and file of clergy or laity of the Church of England in the prevention of war. The League of Nations Union is not supported in any striking degree by parishes. It is indeed a remarkable commentary upon the general moral outlook that, taking membership of that Union as a method of signing a petition for the reprieve of posterity from the horrors of war, it took several years for the L.N.U. membership to pass the number of those who, in a few weeks, are found to sign a petition for the reprieve of one convicted murderer from the death-sentence. One would have expected Christian opinion alone to have exceeded that number within a few months of the start. The Kellogg Pact was not the result of organized Christian insistence. It was not the goads of the Church Militant which drove Mr Macdonald across the Atlantic to discuss the preliminaries of naval disarmament with Mr Hoover. Nor is the Church, as advertised to the public, a healthy example of or organ for peace internationally, industrially, or in any other way; we have other preoccupations.

But it is not too late yet to forestall the added moral confusion which would occur if it ever became the popular talk that peacemaking had ceased to be accounted a blessed thing amongst professing followers of Christ.

This review of some of the factors in the moral situation of the present or the future may perhaps convince you that if there are some people who are in doubt about their standards of conduct because their religious faith is weakened, there are many others who begin to doubt the spiritual truths of the faith because of what they judge to be the Church's moral bewilderment or incapacity.

You might dismiss this consideration lightly enough if the criticism came simply from those who are always, for their own purposes, ready to find fault; but it is a different matter when protests against the morality preached or practised by the Church come from those who honestly claim that they desire a higher standard. In the previous lecture I said that there was one respect in which modern secularism was not inclined to be tolerant towards us. It is the Church's attitude, misjudged or not, upon great moral issues which provokes increasing hostility. Not only do the licentious, who will grab at any excuse for self-pleasing, show this hostility; we can stand that; there is nothing new in it. But it is something new and most disturbing to find an increasing number of high-minded people taking the line "whether the

Church's moral influence is truly Christian or not—is not for us to say. But what we are quite sure of is that the world simply must have a better morality than the Church seems to provide."

I do not pretend that there is evidence for this moral confusion to be found in the parochial round of the average curate in the ordinary parish. What I have been talking about is the moral atmosphere in which people live or will be living; these things affect people often without passing through the mind and becoming articulate at all; when they are consciously recognized, courtesy or hopelessness often forbids their being expressed at all to the minister of religion. They affect first that large majority of people who do not go to church at all, and do not go—some of them—for the very reason which I have been outlining. Thus unless the minister goes almost out of his way to establish intimate relations with people who are not church-goers, it may be only very rarely that he hears these criticisms made. But if, as I have recommended in another connexion, he lifts his gaze beyond the circle of those who immediately surround him, and continually reminds himself that the Church which he serves is a missionary body or nothing—he will inevitably come across moral misunderstanding.

It might then be truly said that, even so, I have given barely a clue as to what may be said in such a situation. I hope, in subsequent lectures, to try and say things which may help in a practical way,

but I shall not tackle in detail the various issues which have just been raised.

I am forced myself to have some sort of answer to give; I am so forced because it is part of my working life to encounter them. I assure you I have not been speaking imaginary things. But the really important thing is that ministers of the Church should get busy thinking about these things. What I have sought to do is to outline an important part of the background against which the work of the ministry has to be done. My aim has been to stimulate thought, not to give cut and dried answers to difficulties. It may be—if I have been at all successful in this aim—that the thought provoked will result in strong opposition to some of my opinions. If such opposition were really considered opposition I should not complain. But there is also this further difficulty. I am bound to have what for the moment I will call "my own" solutions or part-solutions on some of these moral dilemmas; I exhort you to recognize the necessity of struggling through, in course of time, to some sort of solution yourselves. But all such solutions are lacking in any kind of authority. That is the amazing thing, and constitutes the last element in moral bewilderment to which I shall direct your attention.

Academically this is true; occasionally individual scholars write most helpful articles or books; more usually a chapter or two in a book about something else, just as this is one lecture out of six. But I can turn to no academic group existing which deals

with these modern moral problems as a natural development of past moral theology.

Of impromptu, and often self-appointed groups there are no end. I myself belong to more than one; and I do not feel in the least apologetic on that score; it is the only way. But such groups carry no weight with you: "I agree" or "disagree with the C.O.P.E.C. report on so and so." "That was an interesting report of that Committee of the Bishop of X; a pity they had no really sound Churchman on it; its conclusions can't be really Catholic (or Evangelical)." And so on. That's the sort of thing you say, and I don't blame you.

And ecclesiastically?—that is the most important query in a living Church. We are told by not a few that certain moral questions upon which, under utterly different circumstances, the undivided Church pronounced some centuries ago, cannot be reopened except at a properly constituted Council of a reunited Church. I have already made plain my most earnest desire for reunion; I desire that reunion in the direction of the Church of Rome, as in other directions. But to say that until the difficult process of that hoped-for reunion is fully accomplished we are not free to reconsider grave moral issues, seems to me deplorable. It is to abdicate the position of moral leadership, and to deny that the Holy Spirit can operate in the Church of England. Meanwhile the nearest approach to an organ through which we might obtain some authoritative lead for our thinking is the Lambeth Conference.

This year they will undoubtedly grapple with what is clearly an urgent moral as well as a doctrinal problem, the disunion of Christendom. But they cannot be expected in a few weeks to grapple with the dilemmas provided by the whole field of Christian morality.

The only hope—as I see things—is a staff, a sort of General Headquarters of the Church of England, the beginnings of which we already have in certain unobtrusive committees appointed by the Bishops or Archbishops. We do not want the Church of England either armified or vaticanized, but we do need some permanent body to review the whole field and to issue from time to time recommendations as to the lines along which our thinking may wisely proceed.

In the absence of any organ through which the Holy Spirit may be heard, there is an urgent responsibility which rests upon each individual called to the ministry; it is that he should constantly invoke the guidance of the Holy Spirit for himself, that his own thinking may be clear, that he may be free of self-deception, that his thought may be at one and the same time wise and fearless, above all that his own life, inwardly and outwardly, may approximate to the mind of his Master, the Living Christ.

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CHAPTER III

THE TEACHING OFFICE

THERE are many ways in which the Christian minister may help to relieve the pressure of moral uncertainty already described. His first concern must be his own mind. He may, for instance, discover how far his own outlook is negative or not. I suggest the following illustration as a useful test. Suppose that you are one of a group met to discuss the Christian view of married life, and suppose that group to be composed of people more or less like yourself, so that the group findings would be the same as your own. The test is this question: Would the group at the end of ten minutes be discussing that one aspect of married life which is called indissolubility, and spend the rest of the hour in consideration of the Church's attitude towards divorced persons? If so, it will be giving an exhibition of the negative outlook.

I can imagine that my meaning is to some of you not quite clear from that illustration. Let us therefore add another, which I owe to a distinguished novelist. Omit the word "married," and suppose the group has met to discuss the Christian view of life. And suppose that at the end of ten minutes the group was found discussing suicide, and spent

the rest of the hour considering whether or not the Church should give Christian burial to suicides.

What verdict should we pass upon that group's discussion? I can only answer for myself. I should say that the outlook of the group upon earthly life was negative, somewhat morbidly so; it had so little to say about how to live life that it concentrated its attention on how not to end it. If all that a group of Christians could find to say about earthly life was that suicide was unchristian, it would give me, as a passenger through earthly life, no assistance that would be of the slightest value to me.

Return to the first illustration. Let us assume that divorce is ungodly, that marriage ought to be indissoluble, that the remarriage of divorced persons and extended facilities for divorce are undesirable—what help is normally given, what help can I myself give to people about to marry, so that the very best positive good may result from the marriage? Given a satisfactory answer to such a question, the indissolubility of marriage should then hardly arise; it is at any rate relegated, as it should be, to a place of secondary importance.

At Christmas last I was given a sort of Church calendar which, in a small compass, provides an amazing variety of information; amongst other things it tells me what are the five sacraments of the Church "for divers states and needs." Of these five, three are, as you know, Confirmation, Holy Order and Holy Matrimony. For Confirma-

tion a lengthy course of instruction is customary; preparation for Holy Orders, fortunately, is not confined to lectures by divinity professors, or others, on the permanence of the Ordination Vow and the undesirability of being unfrocked. But for courtship and Holy Matrimony no positive instruction is usually given, and because the minister has none to give he necessarily becomes negative. When you catch yourself handing out a negative about conduct, pull yourself up and make sure that it is not because you have nothing positive to say.

It happens that I hold adequate and positive instruction for marriage to be the most important clue to the ultimate settlement of problems of sex-morality, but I do not mention it for that reason. I submit my illustration chiefly as a useful test which you may make for yourselves. Moral teaching on any subject must be positive to be of any value; negatives, no doubt, must be stated; there are temptations to be resisted, sins to be forbidden, risks to be avoided; but these are of importance because they stand out against the background of a positive ideal, and it is that positive ideal which should be our preoccupation as teachers.

Once the minister of religion has set to work to rid his own mind of the negative twist, and to think out the structure of his moral teaching in positive terms, he comes up against the fact that amongst Church-people he is rather unusual in doing so. His outlook is not theirs. Now there is a double danger here to the man himself. He may be

frightened off; the herd instinct pulls him strongly back into the rut. How can he resist the pressure of those around him, including many of his brother clergy? There are one or two considerations which may help him. He is not really alone. He may be a more or less isolated unit, but there are many other such units striving to bring their Church to a new moral vision and a better method. If he would preach to others the need of the moral courage of convictions, he must first lay it to heart himself.

The other danger is of an opposite character. The man may be either hardened into a bitter opposition to Christian convention, or he may positively enjoy being peculiar. To be a minority of one has for some natures a fatal fascination. It is a particular temptation to the over-ambitious man, or equally to the man of small gifts who sees no other chance of expressing himself decisively amongst his fellows. For any such man there are many useful things to remember. It is difficult to take a new and perhaps unpopular line and to remain humble. But if humility goes, truth probably follows it. Humility in this connexion means a genuine dependence, step by step, upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit, a sincere desire to find points of agreement, and not only points of difference, a realization that other people may love Our Lord more than we do and are not necessarily always wrong, a recognition of the fact that whereas people may be led by persuasion they certainly will not be driven.

Let us suppose that this personal problem, in one direction or the other, is solved, and pass on to examine a particular instance of the sort of situation I have in mind. The parochial branch of the Church of England Men's Society is holding its winter monthly meeting, and the agenda contains a resolution of protest to the local M.P. about something to do with street-betting; the resolution is entirely sound; the evil it is directed against is pernicious, the method of dealing with it suggested by the C.E.M.S. is admirable.

Now let us try and recommend the line to be taken by the curate whom we have in mind, assuming that from a Christian point of view the tabled resolution is, in itself, unimpeachable. He will yet be worried by it. And it will worry him first because it is sheerly negative; it is concerned with the suppression of an evil. It will worry him secondly because it is too easy. He will reflect on the speed and enthusiasm with which church-meetings will vote protests and denunciations compared to their reluctance to endure the discomfort of constructive thought.

When he rises to speak he will support the resolution whole-heartedly; he will thank the proposer for bringing it forward, and he will conclude with something like this: "I hope that the branch will not leave the matter there. From the Christian standpoint the whole thing comes down to the right use of money, its possibilities and responsibilities. I doubt if we know where we

really are about this; I'm not at all satisfied that I know where I am. Street-betting, especially for adolescents, is obviously evil in its effects. I have no temptation to do it, but I am not content that I have hold of the right idea of using money. Could not we usefully devote one of our evenings to discussing this matter of the Christian use of money, and invite to that meeting the parochial Sunday School teachers and club-leaders, in order that they may contribute from their experience, and perhaps pass on any useful conclusion at which we may arrive?"

In saying this he would be trying to put the negative against the background of a larger positive. His first proposal of this nature may be stonily received; but he will succeed if he perseveres, not perhaps in securing a fully-stated positive principle about the use of money, but in begetting in others the same desire to escape the merely denunciatory state of mind. It is good work done to rob even one member of a church-meeting of the comfortable feeling that he has done his full Christian duty in voting for a repressive resolution, which somebody else is to carry into effect.

Thus it perhaps becomes clear that if the first duty of the Christian minister as a teacher is to frame his teaching in a positive manner, the second is to make it appeal to the intelligence. At this point I would remind you of two commonplaces which we need to remember constantly: (*a*) that the conscience—however we may describe its

nature and origin—acts through the mind; it is in part a function of the intelligence, and the latter must needs play an important part in the formation of moral judgments; that is the first. (*b*) And the second commonplace is that Our Lord gave principles to govern conduct rather than lists of fixed things which were right or wrong to do.

This second fact throws a great responsibility on the Church or the individual. For the mind of Christ has to be interpreted in a very different age about problems upon which He never touched, in the face of revolutionary knowledge not available to His immediate followers. And the application to any one problem may vary; there is not likely to be a fixed "modern" interpretation of, for instance, the love of man in terms of industry, or of the parable of the Good Samaritan in terms of "neighbourliness." For "modern" is simply a relative term; the reign of Charles II or of any previous King of England was "modern" in relation to Jesus of Nazareth, but ancient in relation to the year 1900. And if the year 1900 was modern, then we must coin a new adjective in order correctly to describe the year 1930. Thus, if it is a mistake to base personal conduct upon a literal imitation of what was said and done by Our Lord in detail, it is an even more serious mistake to take any adaptation made since His time, and to insist that that be not changed.

For the first course, even if it be unintelligent, is very faithful; the comparative unfaithfulness of

the second is not redeemed by any greater marks of intelligence. Yet we pick and choose from the life of Christ and the history of His Church certain literal rules or adaptations of principle; certain adaptations made by the Church in past centuries we have thrown over, some we keep. Some sayings of Our Lord we take very literally and make a very great deal of them; others we neither obey nor adapt, but virtually ignore. I could produce evidence of all these statements, but will only delay you with one. We take very literally what Jesus said about divorce; we do not take literally what was clearly His "mind" about strife and peace. To the upright man who happens to think war the foulest work of man, and whose wife has been ten years in a lunatic asylum, this picking and choosing of moral precept on the part of the Church is quite intolerable. And if and when he asks me why the Church's moral teaching is so curious, I really have no answer which I can give honestly.[1] Now, apart from many other things, at least it is clear that the current Christian code of morals (if you can be sure what it is) cannot, on any ground, claim the sacred right to remain exactly what it is, if it could become clear that the Holy Spirit was calling us to fresh modification or development.

Yet what the Christian minister is up against, partly in his own mind and more so in the mind

[1] I know the "lecture-room" answer; it does not satisfy him. I am pleading here not in favour of divorce but for greater consistency.

of the faithful laity is a conventionalization of an adapted ethic; an ethic adapted in certain respects, and up to a certain time ago, and from that point so conventionalized that if the Christian teacher asks more he is thought to be asking proved impossibilities; whereas if he tries to point out that in some matters the code must be modified, he is thought to be tearing Christian morality to pieces.

One of the remedies for this state of affairs is the steady, courageous teaching of the use of the intelligence stimulated and directed by the habit of communion with God. The minister's task in this matter is difficult; for what is called education for many of our fellow-men and women does not, somehow, produce in them the ability to think. It is no good expecting in the uneducated the processes of the trained mind. The Christian teacher must adjust his own pace and step to the group which he is trying to lead; he must not forget that he too is a learner. His flock may have things to teach him, and in any event, he cannot afford to be indifferent to his own need to study their mind and mental method.

His task is more difficult still from the fact, already noticed, of the paucity of books to help his own thinking. In the past fifty years the issue of books, scholarly and popular, upon the development of doctrine has been steady, even overwhelming. The output of books upon the application of Christianity to conduct has been, by

comparison, meagre. Some of those written deal, so it seems to me, too much with the little things. This reflection brings me to the third requirement which I would stress in the minister of religion as a moral guide; that he should ever have in his own mind, to practise himself and to lead others to develop, the great virtues—love, joy, peace, and so forth. The smallest things, of course, are important in so far as they are connected with the larger, and it is important to help people sympathetically about the small things. But it is pathetic that the main moral interest and energy of the clergy themselves should be exhausted—as is true of some of them—in a preoccupation with the exact degree of sinfulness in writing a post-card on Sunday, saying damn, or drinking cocoa at 1 a.m. bedtime before receiving Holy Communion seven or eight hours later. I am not deriding matters such as these. They have their own importance. What I am pleading against is the preoccupation of moral leaders and teachers with such subjects. Again it depends, I suppose, upon where our gaze is fixed—whether on those immediately around the shepherd, or on the almost infinitely greater number of people beyond, who are as sheep having no shepherd. More will be said about this in another connexion. Here I will merely add that though the shepherd's duty to his own immediate flock of faithful require of him that he should help them on the smaller matters of right and wrong which exercise them, yet he also owes it to them to help

them, where they need it, to face and consider the big moral issues.

Much of this and the last lecture might perhaps convey the impression that what was being urged was that the individual minister, helped hardly at all by his Church, should make himself on modern lines an expert moral theologian in all directions. I do not really mean anything of the kind. I am chiefly concerned about his general attitude of mind upon moral questions, and his method as a teacher; that he should remain himself a learner, that he should not regard Christian morality as a fixed and unalterable body of detailed law; that he should not stagnate mentally about moral questions, nor allow his people to do so. But it is undesirable that the clergy should behave as universal experts in morality. Indeed there is one method of dealing with some problems of right and wrong which is to be strongly recommended on many grounds, not least because it helps our people to understand that they cannot reasonably look to their clergy for detailed instructions upon everything. Because the method is not at all common, I propose to give a somewhat detailed example of it.

Suppose a nurse in a large general hospital to be bothered in conscience by the following difficulty: she is not a particularly slow worker, but she finds it impossible to get through all her work in the ward and at the same time to do it with that conscientious thoroughness which she learned during her training to be indispensable. What shall she

do? She asks her parish priest or the hospital chaplain. Shall she present her problem to the proper hospital authority and risk getting a bad mark for fuss and inefficiency? Shall she get through her work somehow or other, partly for the sake of the patients, partly to avoid getting into a row for leaving work undone, or shall she do as she was taught, trust to the good-nature of others to repair her omissions, and eliminate altogether the slight risk to her patients that might arise through doing her duties for them in a quicker and second-rate way instead of in a rather slower but first-rate fashion? Those are, I think, the only possible choices in front of her.

I propose to spend some time on this nurse. Her problem is typical and illustrates much. A good deal might be said about the minister's treatment of such a question, a good deal which belongs more properly to "spiritual direction." I have written in a book of that title[1] all that I could recommend for this sort of problem, except what follows here; this I include in a lecture on the minister as teacher for reasons which will, I think, appear as we proceed.

First, let us be in no doubt as to the importance of the nurse's question. It is not one of the little things. It concerns her whole life; it intimately and directly connects up with the big things—honour, duty, love of man.

Next, let us notice that the problem illustrates a

[1] S.C.M.

need which has not hitherto been mentioned—I mean the need of knowledge. The positive outlook, yes, the employment of an active intelligence, yes; and now as another requisite, adequate information as material upon which the intelligence may work. We cannot, of course, expect complete knowledge of the facts of all the matters upon which, as individuals, we must form moral judgments. To demand full knowledge, to insist upon waiting for it, would mean often the paralysis of our power of decision. But we do need to be warned, and to warn those whom we teach, against the easy assumption that we can form satisfactory moral judgments on situations, of the true facts of which we are needlessly, yet blissfully, ignorant.

I would bring this into immediate connexion with what has been previously said in these lectures about scientific advance and the increasing body of knowledge which has resulted, about revolutionary ideas which are becoming common, and about the dangers of stagnation in the application of Christian principles to new factors.

Where ignorance is unavoidable we must believe that the Holy Spirit, if we seek His help, will protect us from erroneous conclusions. But to ignore ascertainable fact, to play the ostrich about available information, is pathetic and dishonest. Yet it is constantly done. "I don't want to hear about so-and-so," it is said. "It couldn't alter my decision, which is based on Christian principle."

The answer is: "Perhaps it might not alter your opinion; that remains to be seen. But that opinion of yours, if admittedly maintained in wilful ignorance of the facts of the case, will be worse than useless as a moral aid to those who have a knowledge of the facts and are trying to form a right opinion as to what the good is."

Christian morality falls into disrepute not only when it is negative or unintelligent, but also when it is uninformed.

But it is time that we got back to the nurse. I am at once struck by the range of my own ignorance. Is her ward children's or adults', surgical or what other? The hospital authority to whom the matter might be referred, what sort of a woman is she? Is the hospital, in fact, understaffed? If so, is this due to lack of funds or bad management? These are some of the immediately relevant questions which arise. But my chief handicap is this: I have never been a hospital nurse myself. I don't know the details of the professional etiquette. I know nothing of the technique of washing recumbent bodies, sterilizing lancets, or making custards light enough for invalid digestions.

We are back at humility again. It is amazing if anyone so ignorant of essential matters should think himself competent to pronounce a glib judgment—as to what the good is. Yet the nurse was right enough in coming to the hospital chaplain or other clergyman for help. If she must learn that she

cannot expect him automatically to turn out an answer, she is right in looking to him for some guidance as to the lines along which she should proceed in discovering an answer for herself.

Now the line to be recommended is this, though no doubt in different language: "I have no idea what the true answer to your question is. I do not know what is the good, according to the mind of Christ, in terms of the nursing profession or of twentieth-century hospital administration. The only people who can tell me are nurses; for they alone really know the problem about which you are consulting me. Get together a group, even two or three other nurses, Christian but not necessarily of the same communion as your own. Pray together for guidance and then discuss this question which you have put to me. I will come, if you want, to put before you an outline of some considerations which seem to me to be involved, or to help where and if I suitably can help. But the problem with which you confront me is technical and professional. It had best be professionally answered."

If I thought fit to reply in some such way to the nurse's inquiry, I should myself have no doubt but that the conclusion eventually reached would be a Christ-like solution. And more would be done than the solution of one woman's problem; a group of lay people would have acquired a sense of personal responsibility that they should them-

selves think out the application of Christian principle to the moral dilemmas of their own calling.

I have dwelt at some length upon this particular illustration because it is absolutely typical. Some time ago I was invited to give an address to a group of young business men on "Religion in the Office." I refused, and in some such words as these: "I have never worked in an office; I only know some of its difficulties at second hand. Besides which, offices vary so much. It is for one of your group to give the address. If this is impossible, I will gladly come and open a discussion. To the discussion I shall listen with immense interest as a learner. It is *you* who have got to tell *me* what religion in the office should mean."

Commercial morality, medical conundrums, how to be a bookmaker and a Christian—about these and similar professional questions the minister of religion should not be expected to be an expert. Equally he must himself remember that the fact that he has thought more about moral principles in general by no means outweighs his technical ignorance in particular circumstances. His business is not only to make considered pronouncements on certain general subjects, but also to teach his people how themselves to reach Christian conclusions.

The responsibilities of a Christian minister as a teacher do not end with his exercise of the function

of moral guide. But in one lecture on the teaching side of his ministry, it has seemed to me preferable to treat in some detail one aspect of teaching, rather than to say a little about a great many; and I have chosen the aspect which, as I have already explained, is of outstanding importance.

I will use the conclusion of this lecture to give a wider range to the ministry of teaching. It is important to recognize and treat as channels for teaching all those parochial organizations which exist for that purpose. It may sound silly to say anything so obvious. But it is, unfortunately, possible for a minister, for instance, to regard his Bible Class as something which "has to be run," for which some "lesson" must each week or month be prepared. There always has been a Bible Class; it helps to keep the men in touch with the Church; it is something decent to occupy their time with on Sunday afternoons. It is not unnatural that in these days of understaffed clergy, an overworked incumbent or curate should be tempted to regard an organization of that kind chiefly as just one more thing which has to be "kept going."

It is good to remember, if possible, that these organizations are our teaching opportunity. During part of the previous lectures, for instance, the question may have occurred to some of you—"Yes, but how on earth is one to get new information across—new teaching about the Bible and so on?" The answer is that though the number of

those who are members of these organizations may be but a fraction of the population we yet have in a majority of parishes the channels for teaching ready-made. And do not let us take less trouble about a group because it is small; the four or five it may be who are all that can be secured may be capable of enormous influence in factory, mine, public school, west end society, or wherever else it is whence they come. One of your small group may be a budding Mary Slessor or John Wesley, a Cecil Rhodes or a Frank Weston; a Warren Hastings, Robert Owen, or Charles Chaplin. Some of the most potent influences in their own neighbourhood or in the larger world have attracted no particular notice as boys and girls.

In addition to the ordinary parochial machinery I would specially commend to your notice the Church Tutorial Classes Association, as representing a method very well suited to serious adult education.

Last, and most important of all, are the children. I do them honour and not dishonour by giving the subject a few minutes only. It is a way of indicating that the subject of method in the religious education of the young and in, for example, running the Sunday School, is far too large to be dealt with except in a whole course of lectures by someone with a very close knowledge of his subject.

It is a sphere which is in one important particular utterly unlike that which has occupied us mostly

so far. Whereas I do not find, as I have explained, much constructive Church-thought on Christian morality, I find a great deal of first-rate thinking in lectures, books, summer schools, etc., on the religious education of the child. You may know, and if you do not know, you may be depressed to hear that "meaning well" and "having a way with children," which was considered rather good equipment when I was ordained, is now considered hopelessly rudimentary.

Now that is the only point I will try to make. Whereas it is the vocation of only certain men in the ministry to develop some natural aptitude in this matter into a specialization, practically all ordained men have to deal with children. We cannot all hope to be expert; we cannot all fit into the crowded time of preparation for Holy Orders the study required to equip us to teach religion properly to the child. But we must do what we can, and what we cannot do ourselves we must do through others. The respect and attention which our gallant band of Sunday School teachers will pay to diocesan and other exhortation to learn how to teach and how to know the child-mind, depends really upon their clergy. Without knowing a great deal of detail ourselves we may know enough in general to guide us in directing a Sunday School, and in infecting the teachers with a pride in this work for the Church, and with a desire to learn how to do it in the best possible way.

Newer methods now employed and new knowledge gained and used deserve from the clergy an example of respect and interest. Some of us may be able to give much more; none of us should be content to give less.

CHAPTER IV

ON THOSE OUTSIDE

It is a convenient if not absolutely exact or water-tight division to regard the work of the ministry as twofold: one side is the provision to be made for the faithful, the care of the flock, the development of their spiritual capacity. The other side is the presentation of the Gospel to the inquirer, the semi-detached, the outsider. It is now the latter which will be principally considered.

There is, for instance, open-air work which is conducted on the principle that if people won't come to church, the church must go to them. This intention is fulfilled, particularly in the spring and summer, by open-air work. It must be understood that in speaking of this I have not in mind any special effort, such as a fortnight's campaign or crusade in the market-place, or a pilgrimage through country districts, but more regular evangelization.

The first thing to note about this is that there is no one perfect method of doing this work. You may sometimes meet a man who is masterly in one manner of execution, and uses that always and everywhere to the exclusion of any other. You have much to learn from him, but you should discount his insistence that that is the one and only

way to do open-air work. It is never true, and it encourages the wrong notion amongst his brother-clergy that only a man of special gifts and special training is fitted for this work. The result is that many men who would do some form of open-air work most effectively are frightened off trying at all. I want to encourage you towards it.

The truth is that there are many forms of this work, and perhaps only one complete disqualification; and that is physical. If a man has a thin or weak voice and has an incurably bad method of producing it, it is obvious that people would not hear him in the open-air.

Perhaps the commonest and most effective form of this work is of the "tub-thumping" variety, though in fact it is generally more dignified than that epithet implies. But I refer to the man who stands on an easily movable desk, as does the street-corner politician, or on a wagon on a common and collects a crowd round him, who probably question him afterwards. The method has been most faithfully pursued by the Christian Evidence Society, but it is not inevitable that the speech or the questions should be concerned only with apologetics or Christian belief. Any great Christian cause, such as world-peace, industrial well-being, moral welfare, may be the subject.

The most difficult and most important parts of this enterprise are the beginning and the end; to collect the crowd and warm it up, and then at the end to deal with the questions in the right way.

Though this form of open-air work is difficult enough to render it unsuitable for everyone to attempt, I believe that many more men could do it effectively than ever try. I have known the apparently most unlikely men develop striking powers. Most men who are good at it after much experience would report very strangely of their original incompetence and fears. Two things above all are required in the unlikely beginner: first, a real pastoral enthusiasm; a love of souls so passionate, a belief in and devotion to the cause of Christ so compelling that the man is driven past his first fears and distastes. He feels he simply *must* go out into the highways and hedges. Secondly, humility—how often we come back to that virtue! It is vital that the beginner should recognize that there is a large body of knowledge on this subject, what to do and what not to do, and how to do it and not to do it. He will be saved many unnecessary sufferings and blunders if he has respect for technique resulting from the experience of other men.

Before leaving this form of open-air work I would draw attention to the need of spotting and training the right laymen to take part in it. Shortage of clergy often prevents a minister from ever fitting regular open-air work into his busy life; but, besides this, the working-man, for instance, is often more effective with working-men than is the parson. The layman is one of themselves, lives as they do, has their own mind and knows its processes, and therefore has, in some respects, less to learn.

Witnessing to Christ in the open-air should be often put to the keen young churchman as one of the perfectly normal alternative forms of church-work; but he must be nursed and trained, and not left to shift entirely for himself.

Then there are different forms of open-air service, which are quite unlike this first method. The clergy are robed; they have, if not a choir, at least a group from the Sunday congregation to lead the singing; there may or may not be a procession. Instead of an address alone with questions, there are no questions, and there are prayers and a reading and hymns as well as the address. Much good work may be done under either method by lieutenants organized to mingle with the crowd, get into conversation and follow up in any way which presents itself; but for this work again, some sort of training or preparation is clearly desirable.

The open-air service normally, but not inevitably, follows a service in church on Sunday or week-day, or may conclude with one; according to local conditions it takes place on the steps of the church, in some open space or at a street corner. Some incumbents have the excellent plan of systematically covering the main points in their parish this way, doing perhaps two pitches a Sunday. There may be very few apparently listening, but the service is often conducted at least as much with an eye to house doorways and windows as to the listener on the pavement. There are, of course, just as much

in this method as in the other, things to be learned from the experience of practised men, but the technique is less difficult to acquire, and more elastic and varied.

Either method may serve one or both of two purposes. Open-air work is a means of bringing the Gospel of Christ before those who cannot, or will not come to church to hear about it. It has also its use, just as a demonstration of the fact that the Church cares and that the Church has the courage of its convictions. Whichever purpose it is serving it may be in some instances advisable to suspend open-air work for a time on a particular pitch. Especially where it is serving only or chiefly as a demonstration it need not absorb energy continuously; but even on other pitches it is well occasionally to break into the idea that this work is a piece of routine; a thing may become permanently more appreciated because it is sometimes missed.

I would end as I began about open-air work—namely, that the organizer or speaker must be wedded to no fixed plan or unalterable method. I remember in my own experience one instance which even by itself proves the soundness of this advice. There were two city parks within three miles of each other, and if you walked round each in turn, you would say that there was very little difference in the general environment. Actually one was a little nearer the heart of the city and in a definitely poorer district, though it would be

unsafe to presume that that difference accounted for other differences now to be related.

The striking point to myself about this illustration is that both pitches were worked by the same man, and he was ready to try any method. The one-method man might easily have drawn a blank at one of the pitches; he failed at neither. On one he found the largest Sunday crowd late in the morning at a time when he would have found the other park nearly deserted. Why this should be so, I don't know, but there it was. On the first the only thing which he found would draw or hold a crowd was just a speech; as a speaker at that pitch he was vigorously but seriously questioned, and he collected a band of inquirers who asked to be formed into a winter class. It is sound to assume that in no other way could the Church have got into close touch with that group. On the other pitch later on the Sunday nothing of the kind aroused any attention at all, no questions were asked and very few people came. But as soon as an open-air service started it was very largely attended and was in its own way as successful as the very different morning pitch three miles away. An attempt to analyse the causes of this difference need not detain us; the fact is sufficient.

Open-air work is not the only means of reaching the outsider. There are cinema services, broadcasting possibilities, and other methods. Out of these I wish to commend one in particular, because it is less usually considered and its superficial

difficulties no doubt loom large. It is that people who cannot honestly and with conviction attend our ordinary services, should be given a chance of coming into the church on a purely preaching occasion, so that without implicating or committing themselves, they may hear Christianity expounded.

The attendance may probably be small at first, but that would be because it was such an unusual experiment; it might take long to become known and trusted. It would be probably distrusted at first because the pitch had been queered by half-measures. Now half-measures in this matter are of two kinds.

There is first the very common enterprise of making the sermon the chief thing, yes, but reducing without abolishing the rest of the service. A psalm is sung, there are some prayers and hymns—possibly a creed and lesson. The outsider, of whom I am thinking, does not want to be caught in all that; and he has my profound sympathy, for I am a great disbeliever in truncated Matins or Evensong or a special C.E.M.S. form of service as an effective instrument of evangelization. What I plead for is no form of service at all. Just a hymn, of a non-committal character (there are plenty), or even just the playing of the organ while people come in, then the sermon, concluding possibly with the Lord's Prayer and dismissal from the pulpit, or the latter alone. Nor must the preacher imagine that these other curtailments are designed in order to give him

unlimited scope for being long-winded. I would allow him no more than half an hour, the whole thing, from start to finish, occupying not more than forty minutes. There is one objection to this with which I can scarcely be as patient as I should. It may be said: "Ah, but you bring them into church, and then allow them to leave it without any worship of God." My answer is this: "But the people whom I have in mind have all the other opportunities which you provide for the worship of God and don't take them. They are not certain of God in Christ; they need, and very often want, to learn about Him first. For pity's sake, don't choke them off."

I hasten, at this point, to admit the potency of true worship as a means of evangelization. Those people who attend this special occasion could be advised to attend some other service; or after long and full warning the special occasion might itself every now and then be changed into a service of worship.

I have referred to another half-measure calculated to kill the experiment. It is to choose for it the hour on a Sunday when no one else wants to use the church for any other purpose whatever; the presumption is that this hour is equally inconvenient for those for whom we seek to provide. The church-building and the parish priest are available for the outsider only at the hours when the religious do not want them. This raises, I know, serious difficulties, but it is itself a serious matter. It

involves us in the questions: "Is our Church, or is it not, a missionary society? If so, must the missionary work of the Church for ever take second place to the feeding of the faithful? Are the latter to drain off the best times of day and the freshest energies of their clergy, leaving for the conversion of the outsider the dregs of both?"

We must realize that there is a strong financial answer to these questions. We must be practical; it needs funds to keep the church doors open at all, to run the various organizations, and to do anything like our duty to the Church across the world. And it will be said that if Colonel Boulger's Matins and sermon are put an hour earlier or later, he will be unable to come and, in consequence, he may withdraw his very generous share in the parish's freewill offering scheme; or that to alter the time of the sung Eucharist by half an hour may have a similar effect upon Lady Pansy.

Now I wouldn't deny that if Colonel Boulger and Lady Pansy have been consistently spoilt, the unspoiling of them may be done only at a price. But I believe that a great injustice is often done to them when it is supposed that they do not care enough to put up with personal inconvenience.

Let it be carefully explained to such people, or to their representatives on the Church Council that the reservation of the hour 10.30 to 11.30 a.m. (or whatever hour was decided), was advisable for this new experiment; I truly believe that after some preliminary grumbling, which is the prerogative of

every Englishman, Churchman or not, the scheme would be gladly tried. Indeed the formal proposal to try it might even come from one of those whose objections were principally feared.

A church is sometimes emptied by a new incumbent's ruthless adoption or abolition of eucharistic vestments. The motive of such and similar action can hardly be more worthy than that of the incumbent who seeks to provide means of evangelization for those who are so far outside organized Christianity that they have not yet become preoccupied with the adoption or abolition of vestments as a vital concern. But in neither matter is ruthlessness, brusqueness, lack of consideration for the customs of devout people ever to be justified. Yet somehow, while being gentle, we must be quite firm about the evangelistic vocation of the Church.

I do not myself believe that even such an experiment will entirely meet the present need. It is eleven years later than it should have been. As a common, if not universal, element in the religious life into which the nation might have been invited to settle back after the war, it would have been very effective, and might have established a custom. To establish such a custom would be now more difficult, though I am sure the experiment is still well worth a good trial and may not, by any means, be too late.

The sermon in church is still of sufficient importance to earn a lecture to itself—the next—in this course on Pastoral Theology. But I suggest

that we need further to develop, parallel with it, another method of presentation. We inherit the sermon-form from centuries ago, from an age in which the educational method was largely that of pouring knowledge into people's minds like water into a pitcher. The educational method in other things has changed or is changing. I have recommended to your notice the work of the Church Tutorial Classes Association whose method is based upon that of the Workers' Educational Association. An essential part of that method is free discussion.

Perhaps I might illustrate the point from this very course on which we are now engaged. Supposing that we could set aside an hour and a half or two hours each time instead of one. The lecturer would be asked to curtail his exuberance and not to speak for more than forty-five minutes to open, the remainder of the time being devoted to exchange of opinion, elucidation of points made, and mutual discussion. Even the opening remarks would not be uninterrupted; the lecturer would pause occasionally, but even if he didn't it would not be considered rude or even surprising if one of the audience interjected, "That's not quite plain; would you kindly elaborate the point?" or, "Must we accept that statement just as it is? Could not you quote evidence for it?"

The answer to such questions might be made by other members of the class and not only by the lecturer himself. The heckling atmosphere, which we associate with such interruptions, would be

entirely absent; the object would not be to put the speaker in difficulties, to test his agility in debate, or to prove him wrong; but to make sure that his full meaning was plain, to give him every chance of establishing his points, and to reveal to him for future use the minds of those he was trying to teach. It is a method which has been brought to a fine art by the Dean of the Berkeley Divinity School (now attached to the University of Yale), which I visited some years ago in New England.

I am not meaning to make an heretical attack upon a part of the educational method of my own university, one of the strongholds of the undiscussed lecture of an hour's length in many subjects. I have merely sought to bring home to you by an intimate illustration a truth of which I am quite sure in my own business in life. Whatever may be the most suitable and correct method of education in a university, I am quite sure that in the world beyond, the totally undiscussed sermon or lecture, of whatever length, is not the best method of presenting the Gospel of Christ to the mentality of those who, to-day, stand outside organized religion.

Therefore we need to develop the lecture-form, often perforce in a church, for lack of accommodation elsewhere. People will be perhaps too shy, especially in a church, to ask their questions or make their comments out aloud. This difficulty can be met in part by encouraging written comments to be sent in, and by the lecturer's presence both before and after the lecture at the end of the building

to meet individuals or small groups. My own experience has proved to me again and again that some form of this lecture-method is of more value than many sermons in services as a means of establishing contact with and teaching Christian faith and practice to the outsider.

The value of a course is much greater than that of an isolated lecture, which can hardly serve the purpose of breaking down estrangement between speaker and audience, and of securing a solid interest in the subject. And here the minister of religion needs to keep or develop the ability to give a course at all. I do not go so far as the priest in charge of a famous church, who said to me not so long ago: "No, I don't encourage courses even of sermons here. I find that the preacher can't last out, but starts repeating himself about halfway through the course." We need not be as despondent as this, but we had better realize that the very frequent preparation and delivery of discourses of twenty minutes in length will, in a few years' time, unless we take measures about it, lead to a scrappiness of mentality which may render anything longer and more constructive almost impossible to us.

We will now turn to a quite different department of the problem of reaching the outsider. Amongst the changing social habits of the people of England, to which if need be the Church must adjust itself, is the increase in the use of motor-transport on Sundays. There is not time to consider this from the standpoint of the Christian use of Sunday, for

that would implicate us in the whole complex question of Sunday observance. I treat it now in the more limited context of how to reach the outsider, and we will not give it very long consideration because at bottom it is a problem only soluble by diocesan or central authority. The factors in this matter are simply stated: there is first the advent of the cheap private car, the two-seater, the motor-bicycle, and the growing preference of house-builders and their clients for garages instead of nurseries. Then there is the enterprise of railways and more particularly of bus companies of various kinds in running an extremely efficient service of cheap and very comfortable buses. The effects on country-dwellers may be various; I can only be concerned now with the effect on town-dwellers. Every spring and summer increasing streams of motor traffic take city-dwellers out of the city between 8 a.m. and midday, spreading fanwise into the country and to the coast.

Publicans and other caterers for human desires along the roadside have readily adjusted themselves and their pockets to this post-war development. The Church has not yet made what is admittedly a much more difficult adjustment. But there is time to spare, for the movement is nothing like at its maximum yet. The spring and summer of 1930 will usher in large extensions in the growing custom. The town parson will witness the spectacle of an increasing number of his fellow townsmen and women, including not a few church-people, leaving

their homes by motor-transport for the larger part of Sunday, and returning any time of the late afternoon, evening or night.

This looks like settling down into a real social habit, to be supplemented, in a few years' time, by cheap aeroplane fares. I will again dare to foretell. Within thirty years' time the problem will be how to minister to the enormous crowds who, on a Sunday or over the week-end, will be flying over the Channel into a foreign country. Some country clergy have adapted themselves finely to the present opportunity; undeterred by banana-skins and other litter, they have arranged parking-places and refreshments, have given the visitors a welcome, and have made provision for them in their services in church.

Wherever possible such provision is worth organizing as between a town parish and a country parish, and in a certain diocese, where the centres of population and the sea-coast are both to be found, such organization is, I believe, moving towards realization. Some seaside clergy are very much alive to the fact that Sunday brings on to their parochial sands a large quantity of people who might be by no means averse to taking reverent part in an open-air service. But in most instances where this is done the arrangement is haphazard; I mean it depends on the initiative of the man on the spot, and may or may not be done; it is not yet organized by central authority as part of the necessary machinery of the Church, and there are,

obviously, many practical difficulties in the way when it is from one diocese into another that the week-end migration takes place.

It is worth reflecting whether this detailed change which I have mentioned may not be part of a bigger change; but it is so vague that I will not delay you with it. I refer to the possibility that more and more the place where a person sleeps is becoming less a home and more of a dormitory; that what we mean by "home" means to an increasing number of people little more than the place with a nail or peg for the hat.

There is little, perhaps, that the individual minister, especially in his early years, can do about the particular problem of Sunday excursions, but I have ventured to mention it because it illustrates very well some of the ideas that I have been putting before you. It exemplifies, for instance, the fatuity of meeting a situation with bleak negatives. Protests and resolutions against the desecration of the English Sunday may or may not be in place, but if unaccompanied by any positive action they will not stem the tide, and even if they did so, they do not ensure that Sunday would be spent better just because motor-transport was garaged all that day.

It exemplifies the need of looking ahead and making adjustments in time for the emergency, and not twenty years too late. When the social habits and conventions of a whole people are being changed, then is an ideal time for the Church to make any necessary adjustments. The new habit

which the Church offers may then form part of the general change. When things have settled down again it is far harder to insert a new habit.

This has already been proved in those new towns which are springing up under housing schemes in many dioceses. You have vast new populations with no common centre, with no traditions, all of the families in new homes; there is a complete change in environment, a change experienced by all alike. If a priest-in-charge is early on the spot, followed soon by a church-building of some kind or other, a new and vigorous church-life may result, quite a proportion of the new adherents consisting of families who were not previously church-going. Everything in the new home has to be accepted as new; the church is part of that new environment and is accepted along with the rest.

But let the district get over the time of change, let it settle down for two years; and then introduce a church-building and a parish priest. He may have to compete with a situation far less encouraging. Habits have been established which do not include Sunday School or church. These habits may prove hard to alter. We must recognize and adjust to changes in the social habits of the nation as they are made, or before.

We need to look ahead, even to anticipate social changes of a revolutionary kind. It is no good bewailing such change as yet another weakening of the parochial system. Let us extend our range of vision and get a better sense of proportion. We

cannot be so unimaginative as to suppose that what we call the parochial system as we know it in 1930, will exist in 19,030. It has got to change some time. I am not advocating its abolition now; I do not want to lose it. But if we agree that many things cannot remain the same indefinitely for the duration of man's probable life on earth, we should be readier than we sometimes are to make the adjustments required of ourselves in our own time. The protest, "Things must change; yes, but not in my time, please," is faithless and lazy.

In anything as comparatively ancient and as complicated as the Church of England change must come slowly; it is no good to be in too much of a hurry. So we are sometimes told, and I fully recognize the wisdom of this and the great difficulty of making quicker adjustments. But the fact remains that the world of man is changing with unexampled rapidity; there is no sign whatever that the rate at which these changes come about will slow down yet. It may be, and I think it is true, that we have the good fortune or misfortune to live in an abnormal century, when many new things are being discovered and tried and when the harvest of many other things, new some years ago, is now being reaped. We may or may not like it, but if we would build well for the future we must adjust well to the present. It is a great mistake to confuse two things and to suppose that we necessarily protect the faith of Jesus Christ, in truth the same yesterday, to-day and for ever, by stubborn

attempts to preserve for ever the parish church and its organization as they are to-day or were some hundreds of years ago.

It is true that if there is one thing worse than keeping things as they were for the sake of avoiding change, it is to change for the sake of changing. The latter on the whole, however, does not seem to be the besetting fault of the Church of England; the former might easily become so. One way or the other your generation will decide it.

CHAPTER V

ON PREACHING

Much that occurs in this lecture on the subject of preaching may be equally true of other forms of public speaking, but, unless I say otherwise, it is the sermon that I have in mind. In spite of what has been said in previous lectures the sermon is still the most frequent form of Christianity's oral presentation; and though churches may not be as full as they were twenty years ago, they are attended by an enormous aggregate of people.

I think that some of them hear far too many sermons, but I will not detain you with somewhat speculative suggestions as to the prevention of this surfeit. But I make the statement after having tested it on myself in quite a simple way; it is a commonplace that the good sermon must always in some sense, "come home" to the preacher himself if it is to be of any use to the congregation. Over a period of two months I have made the absurd assumption that all my own sermons preached during that time were good. I have then selected a "come home" for myself out of each. The result of acting sincerely on every "come home" during those two months would have been the combination of a theological genius and an

archangel at the end of that time. This result, if desirable, has scarcely been possible; anyhow I did not achieve it, nor I imagine did any of those who heard my discourses.

Hence it is pretty clear that to hear or to preach too many sermons is not very good for the soul; for it cannot be good to resist any spiritual or moral "come home." Now the remedy for this danger in the case of the preacher's personal life I will not now discuss. The problem of the congregation is sufficient. It is obviously no remedy to preach to them a deliberate proportion of bad sermons, *i.e.* sermons devoid of any possible "come home"; besides, it might become necessary to help them to distinguish which were meant to be the good sermons and which the bad.

All this is less frivolous than perhaps it sounds, for it is getting us near the heart of something quite vital. For if a man realizes after a few years in Orders that people cannot be expected to take his sermons to heart and to act upon them, he is deprived of that which alone makes the delivery of the sermon worth while—missionary zeal, conviction about the importance of his message and about God's use of him, the preacher, as a mouthpiece.

This feeling, not always consciously realized, plays its part in that weary sense of difficult routine which many men may get about their sermons. Such phrases as: "There are my Sunday sermons to be seen to" does not by any means always express

this; it is often a mere convention of speech, and the man who uses it may be very keen on this side of his work. But often enough the words mean no more than they appear to mean on the surface: "My position requires of me two sermons on Sunday next. Somehow or other I must find a subject, and produce something."

Two things, the first of minor the second of major importance, may be said about the particular difficulty which I have mentioned. The first is that there would be still a certain value in sermons, even if no member of the congregation consciously took them away with him and deliberately tried to interpret them in terms of his own life. The faithful preaching of the Gospel of Christ may help to cause a spiritual atmosphere helpful in a general and indefinable way to those who put themselves within its range; but whether this will be so or not will depend no doubt upon the prayerfulness, sincerity of purpose, and conviction of the preacher.

The second thing I would say to the preacher to meet the difficulty is this: "Of course, all the people in church next Sunday morning won't find, or indeed look for a 'come home' in your sermon. But every time you ever preach, however often, there may be some one person whom your words may definitely help. Why despise that?"

I find myself that such an idea as that carries one again and again victoriously through otherwise dry and faithless patches in sermon preparation. Person by person, one by one—that's how our

Lord collected His genuine disciples. Why for me any other way? I reckon the number of times a year I speak in public—50, 100, 200, or whatever it is. Take the smallest figure: that in any one year on no less than fifty occasions some one person has been brought nearer Christlikeness, has become happier or better through the words I have been permitted to speak—to be certain of so much would mean something more than content. And, of course, one cannot be certain of it, but it is not an unreasonable hope. As the preacher mounts the pulpit or stands waiting, let him repeat many times from his heart the prayer: "Just one person, one thing, O Lord."

If the assistance of just one person is the aim of the sermon (and this, I am sure, is usually a sufficient aim), it must not always be the same person, or the same kind of person. For then very soon we shall cease to achieve the desired object. I would instance two different ways in which the preacher may defeat his own ends: first, by harping perpetually on his pet subject: the need for a new morality, the sacramental system in general, the value of the Holy Communion, the importance of regular Confession, the abolition of war, the certainty of salvation once felt assured. These are examples of the sort of obsession from which some preachers are unable to escape.

And secondly the preacher may make the mistake of always addressing his congregation *either* as if they were all believers, all convinced and converted

pilgrims in the Way, *or* as if they were all doubtful and perplexed inquirers or mere hangers-on. Most normal congregations contain both kinds in very varying proportions. The minister will be well advised occasionally to ask himself to which of these two types he has been recently addressing himself, and then to see to it that every now and then he preaches a sermon for the other type.

And now let us turn to the technique of the sermon. I shall do my best to avoid those points which I know to have been dealt with in such books as I have read on the subject; and I shall speak only from experience gained as a preacher or listener, choosing those things which seem to me, as a result of that experience, to be of importance.

Should the sermon be preached from manuscript, notes, or memory? To take the last first, I could not preach entirely from memory myself, because, however well I knew what I was going to say, a paper with something written on it is good company on platform or in pulpit. It helps in protecting one from the nervous fear of forgetting completely what one was going to say. Nor do I think that those who in course of time become entirely free from " nerves " altogether, are wholly to be congratulated. What we call " nerves " constitute the handicap which is often to be found on the reverse side of a valuable quality. It is great, for example, to be imaginative; but those gifted with a keen and vivid imagination suffer sometimes mental tortures unknown to the unim-

aginative man. It is very useful in life to have a keen and detailed faculty of memory; there are times when it has serious drawbacks. So it is an advantage to a speaker, generally though no doubt not universally, to feel things intensely and to possess a not infallible but keen sensitiveness of his audience; but if he is like that he will also never be free of some nervous discomfort, at any rate before he speaks, if not at the time of speaking. I have never entirely lost this sense of discomfort myself, and I don't want to lose it, for I live in hopes that it means I have also a share in the valuable qualities which properly belong to it.

Be that as it may, I pass over memorized sermons, as they do not come within my own experience. I can only humbly admire the great preachers of the past and the present who have used that method effectively.

As between notes and manuscript I assume that the latter will be sensibly read; it need not be written on papers that are clipped together or for some other reason must be rustled or crackled as they are very obviously turned over; it is possible with practice to read a written sermon in such a way that a careful observer could not be certain that it was being so delivered. My advice to a beginner would be to resist stoutly all expert advice which was one-sided, *i.e.* in favour wholly of the written or of the notes sermon. Let the beginner find the method which suits him best; let him find it by degrees without being hustled

or bothered. There is only one exception I would make to this: if the form found most suitable to start with happens to be the fully-written sermon, the beginner must clearly force himself to break away from that form when talking to children or at a service for young people. So much for the beginning. Later, before any one mode or the other is permanently established, the preacher must make sure that he is able, quite happily, to use either mode, and then he must preserve that facility. My own custom, for instance, is to use notes of some kind or other. But no year passes in which I do not force myself to preach three or four times from manuscript, in order that I may never be in the unenviable position of being unable to use either method with tolerable ease. For just as there are occasions when to be tied to a manuscript is absurd, so there are occasions when it is practically necessary to preach a fully written sermon. For instance, a visiting preacher is warned that the large church in which he is to speak is very difficult acoustically, and that the rule is to keep still and to speak in one particular direction alone; perhaps it is the second pillar on the right; a slight turn of the head to left or right will mean that at once a large section of the congregation cease to hear anything. For most men it is impossible to obey this instruction unless a manuscript placed on the small desk in front of them by chaining the eye chains also the head. One knows, of course, quite a lot of men who think they keep the head

steady when they don't, or have to risk inaudibility because, through lack of any practice, they are quite unable to preach a written sermon.

On other occasions, as when the incumbent has just died or the town council attends church officially, it is sometimes desirable to have every word thought out, and to be able later, if necessary, to point to the manuscript as an exact record of exactly what was said.

There are two faults common to beginners which demand special attention. And beginners' faults matter enormously because they tend to become exaggerated and stereotyped into the unalterable custom of the preacher. For instance, if the average number of questions asked in early sermons is six per sermon, twenty years later the average is likely to be twenty or twenty-five per sermon. The incidence of the interrogation in a sermon is worth examining in detail because on many laity it has a pardonably irritating effect, and also because this fault is almost universal in beginners, and is sometimes to be found even in the sermons of those who, in other respects, would be found to be commendably free of literary faults.

I do not include the question which is, so to speak, in inverted commas, such as " The question which next arises is—so-and-so," though even this may be overdone. Take any master of English prose and analyse his question marks. You will turn page after page, for example, of Stevenson's essays and find none. When you do find them,

they will prove on examination to have a purpose. They bite in; they arrest the attention, and they do so partly because the whole essay has not already been peppered with them. A man may say that this is no fair comparison, that a Stevenson essay is, in any event, very different from a sermon. Agreed. Then, do you model yourself on the oratory of Burke? There you will find the same; or would Geoffrey Studdert-Kennedy be a fairer comparison? I turn to some of his liveliest and most rhetorical writings and find pages on end which contain no interrogation; and then, perhaps, all in one paragraph quite a number of rhetorical questions. I quote from the last book published before his death: "There was darkness over the face of the earth and I saw Christ crucified and all the women in the world were in His heart. But He did not die. I saw Him rise again. He is out of prison now and the woman with Him. They have both broken out of the home. And now—what next? What are you going to do with it? You with the bobbed hair and the short skirts and the silk stockings—What are you going to do with it? What are you going to do with Him, the Christ?"

Those questions may not sound much, quoted here; but in their context, led up to by hundreds of words in which no question occurs at all, they bring the point home. But if you must model yourself on somebody or other I advise you not to select Studdert-Kennedy. He was often

quite magnificent as a speaker; but to ape him and fail to bring it off would probably result in something incredibly bad. Thus the first question-danger against which I warn you is the too frequent use of the rhetorical question. Used too often, or about something which doesn't warrant it, it not only robs what might be a powerful rhetorical question at the right time of any proper effect, but it becomes in itself utterly wearisome.

Unfortunately the rhetorical question, the most excusable, is not the only error into which people fall. There is the horrible misuse of the question and answer as a merely alternative method of making a positive statement. "Did Moses descend from the mount? Yes, he did." If it is thought necessary to spend five or ten minutes in repeating what has been already recounted in the first lesson, let it be clearly appreciated that the question and answer form does not really brighten up things at all. It is a hollow device.

That is the unnecessary question; to the rhetorical and unnecessary questions must be added the lazy or dishonest question. The question-form is a fatally easy method of avoiding the discomfort of thought. If we are too lazy either to think it out or cut it out we throw the onus of the matter on the congregation. This hateful practice is introduced in some such way as this: "Wouldn't it be true to say that, etc., etc.?" or "Can you recall any instance in which, etc., etc.?" We are not quite sure whether it is true or not,

but we wish to get all the advantage of a positive statement without actually committing ourselves so far.

I do not mean that this design is the result of deliberate thought. Therein lies the great danger to the preacher. Insensibly he may acquire the mental habit of substituting a "num" or "nonne" for any attempt to think through anything doubtful or difficult. The question-form becomes by degrees not only a sermon-habit but a custom of his own thought-life.

The best way to prevent the extension of any form of question-habit in our sermons is every now and then to analyse the questions asked in our latest sermon, and to interrogate ourselves: Was this one honest? Was that necessary? Would anything have been lost if yet another sentence had been turned into a statement instead of cast into a question? And so on. I am not advocating the abolition of the question; that might result in sermons too dull or stilted. I only desire to utter a most emphatic warning against the cultivation of a habit which—as a habit—is to be mercilessly discouraged.

The other common error of the beginner is at least as serious. It is the use of too difficult language. Now I know that this fault has been repeatedly castigated by speakers or writers on the technique of the sermon. The present Dean of Canterbury for instance, Dick Sheppard, in Lectures on Pastoral Theology some years ago here, under the title of

The Human Parson,[1] dwelt forcibly on this point. One would suppose that anything said by him on the subject of preaching would be read by every man ordained in the next twenty years; apparently this is not so, and I return to the charge because, as I know from painfully vivid experience, the fault persists very commonly indeed. It occurs to me that this may possibly be because men never really grasp what the objection is. I have therefore no hesitation in spending some time upon it, and I do entreat you really to take this seriously.

Let it be quite plain that what is being insisted on is simplicity in language, not necessarily in idea. I am not meaning to open that other subject —namely whether or not the minister should what is called "preach down" to his congregation. Indeed there is much to be said for slightly straining the attention of the listener by giving him material which provokes him into mental effort; if so, the slightly more difficult idea must be clothed in the simplest possible language, but, anyhow, it is not about pulpit-ideas, their difficulty or otherwise, that I wish to speak, but about language alone.

There are two sorts of words which should be banned from most (I don't say all) sermons. The first sort is English which is too difficult. I resist the temptation to put before you a list of the sort of words which would merely provoke your mirth. I have constantly known of the most difficult and thus the most mirth-producing language used in

[1] John Murray.

sermons to middle or lower class congregations: language just tolerable in a university sermon, but certainly not in a college chapel. But I will not illustrate this, lest anyone should suppose I was giving an almost unnecessary warning about patent absurdities.

The kind of word I mean rather is the sort of word we might suppose were easily intelligible, because there is no difficulty about it for ourselves. Here is the sort of thing: Manifest, solution, dynamic, veracity, inevitable, social issues, dormant, appreciate, and so on. In a sense it is the language of cultured, educated people which must be avoided unless the congregation is entirely cultured. Almost always a simpler word can be easily substituted; sometimes the sentence must be reformed, but whichever method is chosen it can practically always be done without any loss to the idea which is being expressed.

But I dare not risk leaving it even at that. It is not quite true that the too difficult words of sermons are words from the ordinary language of cultured people. The man who always says "show" in ordinary conversation will constantly "manifest" in his sermons; the same man says "You can't avoid it" or "it's bound to happen" in his own rooms, but when he reaches the pulpit, he says "It will inevitably occur." Why he should do this, I simply can't conceive; but it very commonly happens. That is what I do know, for certain.

The other kind of word or phrase used which tends to be quite unintelligible is the theological phrase or religious cliché. These are nearly always, in our own mind, the simple key to big ideas; they have been used in our conversation and in the lectures which we have attended; they have been part of the very atmosphere of our study at theological colleges; they are part of our thought-life. Such words and phrases may be illustrated by the following: Blood of the Lamb, Atoning Grace, Incarnate Lord, Remission, Sanctification, Revelation, and so forth.

Now there is a double objection to using words of either of these two kinds. The first obviously is that if our sermons are unintelligible there is really very little reason why we should preach at all. We forget sometimes that what is to the preacher a consecutive chain of thought, because he has carefully prepared it and perhaps gone over it again and again, is to the man in the pew a bag of surprises. Also he cannot turn back a page and read it over again. The speaker proceeds relentlessly. Thus if you distract the man in the pew from listening to your next sentence by leaving a " scale of values " or " Bride of Christ " for him to puzzle over in your last sentence, of course he cannot follow you. In the main he doesn't try, as soon as he sees what sort of sermon he is in for.

We may rightly distinguish between the kind of theological language employed for an ordinary

congregation and, say, that for a Communicants' Guild or Quiet Day; but remember that even the devout may and sometimes do accept and bathe in a welter of theological terms which they scarcely understand at all. In no case am I advocating slang; I don't mean that I am against its use on all occasions by all people. All I mean is that I am not talking about it now; I am simply pleading for a use of simple language, of words easily understood and obvious in their meaning.

If this simpler language is not used there is a result on the minds of many of the congregation more disastrous than the mere inability to grasp the perhaps quite excellent ideas which lie behind. This second effect, which is indeed calamitous, is the separation of religion from life. We all know and deplore the general tendency to watertight Christianity; a special day, a special place, a special hat or suit of clothes, very often a special face and tone of voice. Nothing so finally shuts out reality as a special language.

"Jesus lived in order to show men what God is like." Well, I see the point. But if someone says "Jesus lived in order to make manifest what God is like"—it at once becomes more remote. Reality, immediacy to myself—these begin to recede. It is hard enough for the minister to help his people to keep religion in life, as part of life, as life itself. Let him not increase this difficulty by what may be to them the utter unreality of his own language

about God. The words he uses are not in common use; so neither will be the Saviour with whom those words deal. And that is the point.

Last we come to the subject-matter of the sermon; much has already been implied in these lectures as to what needs talking about. There is a little that may here be added. It is possible to preach from a text or Biblical incident, *or* from a subject—I mean a present-day subject. If a man can't find a text to suit the latter, let him omit that altogether, or having selected a text, let him feel free to say next to nothing about it. Either conventionality or *un*conventionality for its own sake is to be avoided. Avoid the chains of a sequence which has become your own convention. For instance, the text chosen is from Galatians; the man who has stereotyped his form starts with a bit of geography, moves on to the circumstances under which those addressed in the Epistle were living, gets to his point at last, makes his application, and then sums up. Splendid once, still necessary sometimes, but oh, so wearisome, if you never hear anything else! The same is true of length; it needn't always be twenty minutes or even fifteen; it may sometimes be eight, sometimes twenty-five or thirty-five.

And there is one thing, not hitherto specifically mentioned, about which ordinary people do need help, almost more than about anything else, in sermons. It is the application of doctrine to daily life. It is the answer to this sort of question which

is required: "I don't, at this moment, believe in the Communion of Saints. Supposing that to-morrow morning when I wake up I am prepared honestly to accept it—in what respect, if any, should my life be different to-morrow—*i.e.* better lived than it has been to-day?" or "I do not at present believe in what you call the divinity of Christ. What difference would it make if I did? What improvement would be effected in my approach to the problems of life?" It is not apologetics that are asked for in these questions. It is not the exact logical place of a particular article of belief in the Catholic Faith as a whole; it is just the ordinary practical man's desire for a creed which has some real relation to the life he is supposed to try and live here and now.

So, we return once more to conduct. We can't really escape from it. If it is true, as I believe, that a minister's most potent sermon is his own life, the degree and the quality of his own communion with God, it is equally true that the only effect worth producing from the pulpit is an effect upon people's lives. By their fruits ye shall know them.

The minister's preparatory study of theology for examination and kindred purposes is bound to be in itself too academic for the particular purpose which I have in mind. He must retranslate pure theology into practical matter. For the unspoken questions to which sermons should be supplying an answer are such as these:

What *is* the good?—and why? How does belief in all the detail of your Faith help me to discover it, or, having discovered, to do it?

If it doesn't serve this purpose what other purpose does it serve?—and how?

CHAPTER VI

ON THOSE WITHIN

I DO not propose to occupy this last lecture with a subject which has not yet received formal notice separately. I mean the personal character and life of the minister himself. Very frequent reference has been made to that subject throughout the course; we have never been far from it for long; certain qualities and duties have been emphasized; but I am unwilling to spend your time in collecting and now repeating these various references, though we may no doubt add to their total or repeat them incidentally.

On the whole the subject of Pastoral Theology has been treated in these lectures with an eye chiefly, though not entirely, to the present and future difficulties of those who stand outside organized Christianity and find neither its faith nor morals, as they suppose these to be, acceptable.

Now we will balance things up by concentrating almost entirely upon the shepherd in his relationship to the sheep of the fold. We have noticed that their own souls' welfare and the need of the world demand of them that they regard their religion, not simply as a possession to hug to themselves, but also as a privilege to share and pass

on; and we have considered some of the ways in which their clergy may help them not to lose sight of this duty.

But we are charged with the care of their own spiritual welfare and it would be an unduly limited, care if it was confined to kindling their zeal and developing their capacity for evangelism.

So again we have been concerned chiefly, though not exclusively, with the public work of the ministry, preaching, lecturing, open-air work, and so forth—viewed against the background of what is or is likely to be the condition of the popular mind. This needs to be supplemented by some attention to the needs of the individual.

It happens that I have recently written in a book most of the things which I consider most important about the technique to be employed by the minister in dealing with individual members of his flock; without assuming that you would read that book I am clearly not free to indulge here in mere repetition of what I said there. For the most part I must confine myself to other points.

And first a word about contact with people. The modern parson's life is often full of meetings, of committees, and of other bodies which may seem on paper to be distractions from his main vocation and mission. And, of course, it is true that he may have much too much of this sort of thing. But there are two points which may be made for your encouragement about this, or perhaps they are really one and the same.

To the true man of God there should be no oversharp distinction between secular and sacred. To him all earth is a sacrament of heaven. The time which he has to spend on what seems to him to be secular or semi-secular business, may be regarded by him as his opportunity for helping to break down that watertight division which often exists between church-worship and the rest of life's affairs. And secondly, semi-secular affairs may be invaluable as a means of forming contacts with individual people.

"I noticed you at the Boy Scouts' Social," or "I met you for a moment at a League of Nations Union Meeting," may often be the preliminary to a request for spiritual help. It is sometimes that the person desires to receive some previous impression of the man who is to help; more often it is simply that people find it easier to open up to someone who, so they feel, is not quite a stranger to them. Sometimes, again, people are drawn to confide in a clergyman just because the latter has shown some interest in what interested them.

If you indulge a perpetual sense of responsibility for a personal ministry you must be prepared to adjust quickly to its demands. I will illustrate the way in which a minister may be taken by surprise, or even fail to notice that his personal ministrations are required. At 8 p.m. on a Tuesday night you are due to give a lantern lecture at the boys' club. At 6.45 you sit down to a late tea or early supper. At 7.20 by appointment the treasurer of some local

church activity calls on you to do business about the accounts. His business should take twenty minutes at the outside, leaving you just time to get round to the boys' club.

The treasurer comes punctually and does his business in a quarter of an hour, whereby you stand to win five minutes extra from a busy evening. As he rises to go he makes some remark which is really a tentative approach to you as a shepherd of souls. Now what will happen if you are not spiritually alert? You will not notice the approach; your mind is already switching over to the boys' club, so much more attractive than old Jones with his walrus moustache. To you he is just a useful lay-machine for doing church-work in his spare time; if he has a soul at all you have never had occasion to notice it. In any event he has no right to protrude a soul into your carefully arranged evening. So you return some platitude to his remark and bid him a hurried good night. But if a man is spiritually alert he will deal differently with the situation. In old Jones' remark he will detect at once a possible call from God; he may not be able to sacrifice his 8 p.m. engagement, but he will manage to squeeze in ten minutes with the treasurer, after the accounts are done with, talking with him not as with a treasurer but as with a human being. And he will make a mental note to invite old Jones in some evening soon not in order to talk over accounts, but in order to make friends with him.

It is a great help in doing semi-secular business to regard it as an opportunity of making contacts; but it is clearly useless to make contacts and then to turn a blind eye to the opportunities which arise from them. Two things seem necessary: first, a refusal to become mentally grooved, the victim of mental routine. In this quite different connexion I renew the plea for a mental elasticity, an ability to adapt and adjust to new situations, which is perhaps the most valuable mental asset in a minister. But mental alertness alone is not enough; there must be a keen spiritual sensitiveness as well. This cannot be secured except by prayer. Pray by your diary. On the Tuesday morning on your knees you open it; you think briefly in God's presence of the places you are bound to go to and of the people you are bound to meet. You do not spend long on most of them in detail. You just recall them against the background of the prayer, hardly put into words perhaps, that God's Will may be done and His Kingdom come through you.

And if you are wise you will not forget to pray about the unexpected. Your diary will not disclose to you all the people you will meet; for you do not know, and you cannot guess. Spend a few silent moments committing your way to God, the Holy Spirit, and asking that you may be quick to see His guidance in the unexpected and, having seen, to follow it.

In dealing with individuals another important point is to avoid the chains of a formula. By a

formula I mean one stereotyped method of dealing with people or one type of prescription handed out to all and sundry alike. "Sacramental Confession" is as good an example as any, because it is an example which works both ways. A man's common prescription often is "Come to Confession;" often his formula is some other with Confession in all cases omitted; he may even be taking part in a crusade against Confession.

The only crusade worth conducting against Confession is a crusade against the wrong provision of that ministry. If it be asked: "What do you call wrong Confession?" I mean Confession as a formula, almost as a compulsion, administered by men who have a laudable knowledge of Catholic discipline and a comparative ignorance of, or disregard for, human nature. If it be asked further: "What is the crusade which you recommend against this?" my answer would be the administration of Confession rightly, with a developed power to discern the different spiritual needs of different people and a frank recognition that for many people this ministry is urgently required, and for others not. If I have been at all right in the emphasis which I have laid in these lectures upon the pressure of moral problems in our time, then it is, I submit, calamitous that our Church should be still, in the main, divided on a matter which touches moral conduct so intimately.

But I would not leave you with the impression that in objecting to formulas I have simply this

subject in mind. I think, too, of the fact that at any epoch in one's ministry one may be confronted with someone undergoing some spiritual experience totally outside one's own range of practice. I remember, with gratitude, being warned about this in my own Ordination Retreat in an address by Canon Peter Green. I remember, too, my reflection at the time that it would have been more helpful if my mind had been led to face this possibility a year before my ministry began instead of two days before. That is why, having proved the truth of what he said, I pass it on to you now. One suddenly realizes that one is up against some personal problem which no formula covers; one encounters a spiritual emotion which can be canalized in none of the stereotyped channels; one meets someone viewing Christ at an angle of vision at which one has never perceived Him oneself, or walking along a road towards Christ which one has never trodden oneself nor imagined to be trodden by anyone at all.

It is an awful responsibility, on such an occasion, to be a minister of the Gospel. None of us is sufficient for such things. And no formula is sufficient. But it is annoying to be hit over the head with a word, and I will illustrate still further what I mean by a " formula."

" Come to Church " is a formula.

" Make more frequent attendance at Holy Communion; " that is a formula.

" Go on praying about it; " that is a formula.

"The Bible says so; or the Church;" these are formulas.

All these are, without doubt, ultimately true. They represent the worship of God; the comfort and strength of the Blessed Sacrament; faith in the power of God in general; the medium of the Holy Book and of the Holy Society.

But if you would be a fisher of men's souls in the modern world these are nets whose mesh is too large. To put it differently—often none of these formulas goes far enough back; thus they do not meet, touch, or provide for what is the real difficulty. They are too easy—too easy to say, I mean, and that is the snare of any formula. It is easily said; it covers a multitude of cases; it is the person's own fault, we say, if he does not act on the advice given. Now let us consider in greater detail the inadequacy of just one of these formulas—the advice or exhortation to make the difficulty a subject of persevering prayer.

I propose to demonstrate the ineffectiveness of such advice, first in certain particular cases, and afterwards on much more general grounds. The person's difficulty, let us suppose, is what he calls his besetting sin—let us say, deceitfulness. He lies not infrequently; he is seldom straightforward.

There are several reasons for which the ministerial injunction to pray about this is inept. In the first place that is just what the man has been doing; he has been so exhorted by clergy before, and has dutifully obeyed. You may argue to me: "But,

surely, perseverance is one of the great things Our Lord taught about prayer; I can quote a parable bearing on the subject." My reply would be: "I, too, can quote parables. Was perseverance the only thing Our Lord taught about prayer?" And note further that the duty of perseverance in prayer may be a great snare to the spiritual adviser. It provides him with a formula, behind which his own ignorance or laziness may shelter in every eventuality. "Well, stick to prayer," says the minister. "It's the only thing." That may be true; it may be the only thing the minister has to say.

Now I would never, myself, give this advice alone to anyone whose besetting sin was deceitfulness, but before explaining why, I must eliminate one possibility—the possibility that the person has a kink or is mad. The neurotic or the lunatic lies in a sense for the sake of lying; nobody else does so.

And let me here, by the way, warn you against the formula in your own mind, "He has a complex." I would give every encouragement to those who recognize that a vital part of the equipment of a shepherd of souls is some knowledge of modern psychology; but I would advise you not to classify people too readily in terms of psychological jargon.

Well, on the assumption that the man is sane, he is deceitful for some reason or other. He lies through fear, or pride, or jealousy, or ambition, or what not. And deceitfulness is one of the deteriorations of character that follow in the wake.

It is the symptom of a bigger ill, bigger in that that from which deceit springs may lead to many other evils, of which deceit is but one. Now there is nothing clever or over-subtle in the foregoing analysis of deceit. Anyone who applies common-sense to the matter is bound to reach the same conclusion. Then it is little use directing the man to pray about the symptom. He has got to pray about the cause.

Let us suppose that he discovers the cause to be pride—and note that if possible he must (no doubt with your help) discover the cause himself, rather than receive that information from you. Pride may lead us on to other complications, but let us keep it very simple and suppose that the man is just very vain and deceives in order to acquire undeserved approbation and to appear a much finer fellow than he really is.

Then if the first question about a besetting sin is "What does it spring from?" the second is this: "Is the sin a perversion of something that is good? Is it a good gone wrong?" For if I can at all answer this question or help the man to answer it, I shall be able to lead him to pray positively, *i.e. for* something good instead of simply *against* something bad. Probably you would decide to point out to such a man that there is a right respect of self, a legitimate desire for the good opinion of others—but that this may be entirely spoilt and lost by being gradually soaked up into vanity, its excess. That the best remedy for vain-

glory is to learn the lesson of giving God the glory; if we only care enough that His name may be hallowed, we shall see the hollowness of vainglory, especially when bolstered by deceit. Thus the man must be led to meditate on God as the focus of worship and adoration; or—if that is too difficult for him—he must be helped quite simply to pray that he may learn to give God the glory, and to live his life to that end. Nothing, you will notice, comes into the prayer about deceit at all, and this, incidentally, is a benefit, because it helps to prevent the besetting sin becoming the obsessing sin.

But that is not all. You may find, though you have discarded your easy formula, that, in particular instances, even all this does not solve the difficulty. For the man proves to have made all these discoveries already for himself. He has for a long time been praying about a cause, not a symptom, and though he has been praying for a positive virtue, the original evil still persists. The besetting has become the obsessing sin.

It may be that the only way for a man to deal with an obsessing sin is to act as if the constant prayer for its removal had already been answered; this is strictly in accord with Our Lord's teaching on the prayer of Faith—that power is given, is waiting, but is often not apprehended. Then the only reference to the sin in prayer would be no petition at all, but an affirmation or Act of Faith. You would probably find that the man did not

know what this meant or how to do it, and you would have to explain.

I do not pretend that all this is an exhaustive account of how to deal with besetting sin; it is merely a sketch of the prayer-side of the struggle. In giving this illustration I have sought to justify my use of the adjective inept as a not unfair description of the formula "Pray about it." If that is all the pastoral help we can give to the individual, it is, often, nothing like enough. It is really as amateurish as if the doctor were to say to all and sundry "Take exercise," and suppose that that fulfilled professional requirements.

And now from the particular instance which we have been examining I want to pass, as I suggested, to the more general. There are increasing signs in the Church of England that we are waking to the fact that there is not enough prayer, and even that prayer itself is not understood. The existence of the Jerusalem Chamber Fellowship of Prayer is such a sign. The same conviction lies behind the Way of Renewal for the Clergy, inaugurated by the Archbishops' Pastoral. Those who were responsible for the World Call to the Church made the same discovery, and Schools of Prayer, following on the Missionary Schools, have resulted.

The significant thing to note in this Prayer Movement is that whereas it started with an emphasis on the need of more prayer, it seems to be transferring this emphasis to a need for more knowledge of what prayer is and how to do it.

Until quite lately the assumption has been that the activity itself, prayer, was simple enough, and that people chiefly required exhortation to indulge in it. As may perhaps have become clear even from the one very limited example just described, the exhortation to pray is too general and undefined. The difficulty may be shown in a brief dialogue:

EXHORTER: Be good.
EXHORTED: What is the good?
EXHORTER: The good is this and that. Be good.
EXHORTED: How?
EXHORTER: By prayer.
EXHORTED: And how does it work? How does one do it? What do you mean?

Or we may imagine a similar sort of dialogue on the principle that it is not conduct which matters most, with prayer to help it, but that prayer, fellowship with God, matters most and conduct tests it:

EXHORTER: Abide in Him. That is the aim for life.
EXHORTED: All right. How does one do it?
EXHORTER: By a life of prayer.
EXHORTED: What does that really mean? How does one set about it?

Now to these last questions I submit that the answer by formula is likely to become year by year less helpful. The answer by formula is: "Attend Mass. Make your Communion. Come

to Church. Join our Prayer-meeting. Make your Confession."

I do not mean that there are not a large number of people for whom this sort of answer is sufficient. But, as time goes on, the number is less; there are an increasing number of otherwise good Christians to whom this stock-in-trade answer is insufficient, and I suppose that I should be expected to justify this statement. I can only do so by repeating what I have been saying on and off for years; and I do so gladly, without any sense of apology due. For I remember some time ago hearing one of our leaders say something like this: "If you become truly convinced that some big change is necessary, it is no good at all saying so once. You must go on saying it again and again, if necessary for years and years."

I propose to make you, for a few moments, the victims of that excellent advice. My theory is that we are only beginning to reap the harvest of the *mental* effects of the mechanical age in which we live. That age started with the discovery of steam-power; its mental effects may be said to have started when the first boy said for the first time: "When I grow up I want to be an engine-driver." The interest in mechanism has been tremendously quickened in our own time by the dissemination of popular scientific information about the mechanism of the universe, and by discoveries like broadcasting. Into the middle of this have come easily popularized ideas about the mechanism of the

mind—the new psychology. People increasingly demand an answer to the question "How does it work?"

You may say that no end of people do not consciously ask this question at all. That does not really meet my contention. I remind you again of my quotation from Bishop Paget of Oxford, given in the first lecture. The mental attitude of a generation can become gradually changed without undergoing any conscious mental process. And that is what I believe has happened and is happening.

We need a practical science of religion. The enormous attraction of what is known as "Christian Science" is in part its very name; in part the fact that in considerable detail it adjusts the mind, the thinking, to the prayer process. I do not ask for the name, but I ask for education in the life of prayer which shall fit the changed and changing mentality of the generation in which we live. I would not deny that there are many who, in an unconscious reaction from the tendency of the age, or for temperamental causes, make no such demand. They seek rather, for practical life, a presentation of religion which emphasizes the authoritative note; they need and expect no rational help. There is no doubt in my own mind that, in your time, provision will always continue to be adequately made for these people. My fear is lest the rest, the majority, give up in despair the Church in which they believe at heart, because they find in psychological experts, or in "new religion" fads

a practical help for daily life which they do not find from the teaching of the professional exponents of Christianity.

Against this fear is to be set the new movement about prayer to which I have referred. I commend it to you most earnestly. Its object is well described in the Rev. H. P. Statham's pamphlet, *The School of Prayer in the Parish*.[1] On its educational side it is to remove the emphasis from words and put it on thought behind words; to get away from "saying prayers" and "saying offices," to thinking God's Will and ways. You can test the necessity of this movement in your own prayer-life. Read any of the modern books, even the little ones, on the subject of prayer; I do not mean the books chiefly concerned with exhortation to prayer, but with the technique of the activity. Out of many I might mention, I suggest, for instance, *Christ's Method of Prayer*, by Strong.[2] I should be rather surprised if the perusal of even the first few pages did not make you feel something like this: "This is very elementary; not at all subtle or ultra-modern. It's really very obvious. But very little of it has ever struck me before. I've never thought it through. I'd better start." And if we could speak like that, how much more so our people.

I do not wish to commit myself to the recommendation of either of the publications, which I have just mentioned, as completely covering the

[1] S.P.G.

[2] The Oxford Mission to Calcutta.

ground or dealing in all respects as I personally would wish with the technique of prayer; nor does that in the least matter. They both, in very different ways, illustrate the newer line of approach to the whole subject.

The heart of our problem is really this: that our people need knowing and helping very often one by one; congregations, audiences, crowds or smaller groups give the contacts, but beyond a certain point it is often only as individuals that they can be helped. This, again, would be a reflection of a tendency of the age. It is an age for sorting out children's vocational symptoms, or workers' industrial capacities. This tendency in secular matters is likely to increase, so that the atmosphere in which people's minds grow will be increasingly an atmosphere of individual treatment, of the consciousness of distinct personality. If so, it comes very hardly on us at a time when the proportion of clergy to laity has so shrunk that it is difficult enough to keep the Church going efficiently as an organization; it is hard to be told that the age more and more demands that the clergy shall be both willing and able (willing and able—the two are not the same) to deal with people as individuals who differ exceedingly.

There is, however, a very great consolation; it is to be found in the example of Christ Himself, who though He may have lived in an easier age, was the *solitary* exponent of revolutionary views of God and life. I don't pretend that I can free

my mind from the bias which you may perceive that it has on the subject; but, even allowing for this, it seems to me that any one, or all four, of the Gospel accounts convey the impression of a man, who, though He was followed by crowds and preached to crowds, yet concentrated His most effective work on individual persons.

There is one example from His ministry which seems to me to parallel closely the subject of formula which has so largely figured in this lecture. An individual person came and asked Him the simple question "What shall I do?" The whole thing about which he had heard Jesus speaking had to be interpreted in terms of his own life—different from anyone else's, of course. But Jesus answered him with a formula, the sort of formula that was easy on the lips of the professional teacher of religion: "Don't kill, don't steal," and so forth. The modern counterpart to that answer we have already been considering; once more I will remind you of it. It is this: "Say your prayers. Fulfil your religious duties. Come to church. Read your Bible. Keep your days of obligation," and so on.

Again I submit that to a very large number of people that kind of answer to their question "What am I to do?" is almost wholly inadequate. It gets no nearer the point than the formula of the day which Jesus handed out to that man. But you will remember that the incident did not close with a formula. It closed with a particular recommenda-

tion demanded by the man's individual need. That recommendation was prompted by the Divine Wisdom; even so we must continually seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit that our insight may be sure. It sprang also from experience, the knowledge and observation of men; our own intelligence must be similarly employed.

It came also, we are told, out of the heart of love; but of this we should scarcely require to be reminded.

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